SON OF AMRAM

G. MONROE ROYCE

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The Son of Amram

BY

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"We can never be quite sure of the absolute correctness of the record of any series of events, no, not even when ten years, instead of ten hundred, have elapsed.

" . . . The record of the thinking and feeling of the human race is the only history worth careful considering, for of the truth of that record we can be certain."—OLD TESTAMENT AND MODERN LIFE.

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Preface

THE story of "The Son of Amram" is an attempt, in the form of fiction, at a true and complete account of Moses and the beginnings of Israel. It contains also the fullest sketch of the Great Rameses,—his person, his character and his achievements, that has yet appeared—so far as I know.

So much is claimed for this book, whatever its shortcomings may prove to be. I desire only to add that "The Son of Amram" is written from first to last in the spirit of Biblical and Hebrew tradition, but at the same time in the full light of the latest and "highest," *i. e.*, the sanest criticism, both of a literary and an archæological character.

G. M. R.

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The Son of Amram

CHAPTER I

THE FESTIVAL OF THE DEAD

It was a night of deep and silent darkness over all the land of Egypt, when suddenly, as by magic or miracle, there shot forth myriads of bright lights, illuminating the valley of the Nile from the first Cataract to Memphis, a distance of many hundred miles. But the black, low lying delta widening and stretching away to the sea was lighted only at long intervals, for it was the season when Father Nile was spreading his mighty arms abroad, carrying on his bosom the rich red soil of far-off Nubia and Abyssinia, which year by year brought new strength, new life, and new wealth to the great Egyptian nation. Not only was every temple, memorial statue and sepulchral chapel ablaze with fires and torches, but upon the door frontal of every Egyptian house or hut, from the divine pharaoh down to the lowest fellah, a new lamp flamed and flickered and burned. This sudden illumination dispelled the

dense darkness; but the silence still reigned save as it was broken by the low plaintive voices of priests, who in solemn procession wound slowly in and out among the long shadows cast by the flickering fires, chanting their dirges and litanies. This was the night of the festival of the dead, and every Egyptian kept the feast,—for none was so poor, none so friendless as not to possess the memory of some one loved and lost; and these fires were kindled, these lamps were lighted that they might guide the departed ones back from the shadowy land of the dead to the earthly home where they had lived and loved and ceased to be.

This national faith expressing itself in such weird and picturesque symbolism was certainly impressive, and its grotesqueness might have been lost in its solemn reverence, had this festival consisted solely or mainly in a ritual of the dead, or other fitting religious ceremonies. But this was no longer so. The Egyptians had no longer any real faith. Religion as a reality was extinct; and there were only the externals of religion left. But as religion died, the grand festas increased in outward pomp and ceremony, and always ended in debaucheries and the lowest forms of idolatry. It is true that this greatest of all the religious anniversaries was ushered in by a stately and solemn procession of

priests; but these ceremonies were followed by a night of the coarsest and wildest dissipation, which gave it the name of "The Night of Drunkenness." That this festival of the dead had its origin in genuine human love and sorrow is beyond question: but that it now served as a weak excuse for all sorts of excesses is equally plain. The priests and all the high class Egyptians knew and fully appreciated the changed conditions of this once sacred festival, but they did nothing to reform it, for they saw that these orgies of lust and impurity weakened the masses and rendered them the more defenceless as the servants and slaves of the pharaoh, the priesthood, and the princes of the land.

The priest is here placed next in order to the pharaoh, and so he certainly was: indeed in a certain sense he was identical with the pharaoh, for no pharaoh could be crowned without first having been elevated to the priesthood, and his coronation carried with it his consecration as high priest of all Egypt. The pharaoh was the only universal high priest or pope of Egypt. He combined within himself the temporal and spiritual sovereignty of Egypt. There were other high priests, so-called, but their dignity and authority were limited to one temple and one order of priests; for each temple had its own order of priests, independent and distinct

from all other orders and temples throughout Egypt. The high priest of each temple was a personage of great consequence, and was usually the prince of the nome, and it might be the son or the brother of the pharaoh. The priesthood was for the most part hereditary, indicating that the priest generally was a husband and a father.

The priest and his family lived within the immediate precincts—it would hardly be proper to call them the cloisters—of the temple. This residence was always spacious and comfortable, and often luxurious in its appointments, and palatial in size. The priest was exempt from taxation and all services other than those pertaining to his office. He had however the privilege of serving in the army, and some of the greatest Egyptian commanders were from the priestly order. The revenues of the temples were about one-third of the gross receipts of the entire nation; so that one can easily understand that the position of an Egyptian priest was one of comfort, dignity, and power. He was of noble—sometimes of royal—birth; belonged to a privileged class, controlled vast revenues, and wielded almost unlimited power over the fortunes and lives of the people.

The priesthood made and unmade kings, and so powerful did it finally become in the later

dynasties as to overthrow a line of kings and place its creature upon the throne of the pharaohs. But in no instance was the power or authority of the priesthood exerted in behalf of the people, that is, for their material and spiritual good. It was naturally a very great distinction as well as a great privilege to belong to this order; and the Egyptian youth had realized his highest ambition when he was admitted to the ranks of the higher orders of the priesthood. The priesthood was for the most part hereditary, but this heredity was not in the sense of a fixed and exclusive caste. New families might be admitted at any time; but they were always taken from the nobility, or were the protégés of some one in power. So much for the character and position of the ancient Egyptian priesthood.

On this night of the festival of the dead—or rather this night of "drunkenness" as it was now popularly called, two young men who had been attentive spectators, both of the religious ceremonies and the debaucheries that followed, are seated in their student quarters at the University of On in thoughtful mood. They are of about the same age, and not unlike in their persons. They are both tall and strong and dark, and decidedly handsome. In dress and bearing we see at once that they are

young gentlemen of very high birth and position. We notice first this general resemblance, but upon a closer inspection we see many points of difference. One has a light brown, the other a dark olive skin. He of the dark olive skin is taller than his companion, and more firmly knit together in body and limb; and, now that we see him better, is clearly not a typical Egyptian. He is, if anything, the handsomer of the two, and gives the immediate impression of a very strong and commanding personality. A still closer inspection reveals the fact that he is of the Semitic type and probably of Hebrew blood. The other youth possesses all the more marked Egyptian features, except that his face gives evidence of a more lively temperament than is typical of his race. These two young men have grown up together from infancy, and are now students at the University of On—the most celebrated seat of learning in Egypt and the ancient world. But they are not lodged as ordinary students. They have palatial quarters apart from their fellows, and there are many other tokens of their exalted station. Their sleeping apartments communicate, and they are accustomed to visit each other at all times and under all circumstances without ceremony.

And yet in spite of this familiarity and appar-

ently equal comradeship, it is easily seen that these young men are not of equal rank in life. In fact he of the Egyptian type is no less a person than Prince Rameses—son of the pharaoh and nominal joint-ruler of the land, whilst the other is the adopted son of the pharaoh's favorite sister. This explains how it has come to pass that the son of the pharaoh and the son of Amram have grown up together in the bonds of familiar friendship and love—unconscious as it now seems of the differences in their rank and race which must in time separate them. It is true that the son of Amram has been brought up to address his playfellow as "my prince." This meant little or nothing on his childish lips; but its meaning has grown as he grew and he speaks it now in a tone and manner which plainly show that he is ever mindful of the respect and reverence due his companion's superior rank. But on the other hand they could not long converse without the prince giving some frank and generous recognition, in one form or another, of his friend's superior mind. They are thoughtful and silent on this festival night, for they have been sad witnesses to the awful degradation of their nation and their religion. The prince, as usual, is the first to speak.

"Well, Mousa mine, say something to relieve the situation. Anything will answer. But I suppose

your thoughts, like my own, are riveted upon what we have witnessed to-night, and it is just as well that we should have a frank talk on this subject. What think you of this national feast—this festival of the dead?"

There was a rather long pause before Mousa answered, and when he did so it was with great deliberation, and with more than his usual seriousness of manner.

"Evil and only evil can come of these brutal orgies, my prince."

"But," said Prince Rameses, assuming as was his wont the attitude of challenge, "the priesthood to which we are both attached sanctions if it does not encourage these ceremonies—and—yes, these practices, which you are pleased to call—what was the expression?"

"Orgies. Brutal orgies."

"Thanks, yes, 'orgies.' It is true the priestly order does not take an actual part in these 'debaucheries'—that was another soft word you used, I think—but it does nothing to check or reform them, and ——"

"Just so, my prince; and there is the serious feature of the case, and the point which most concerns us as novices of the priestly order."

"You think then, my Mousa, that the pretence

of religious sanction involves the priesthood in the guilt of these sensual excesses?"

"Can it be otherwise, my prince?"

"By the way, Mousa mine, what is religion?"

"I have often asked myself that question, my prince, but have made no attempt at an answer."

"I hope it may not be put to me at the examinations."

"No, there is no danger of that. Such a question publicly announced might set young minds a-thinking."

"Well, perhaps so. But it seems to me that at least one young mind has been already set a-thinking. What did it, my brother?"

"Many things. Yourself amongst others, my prince. The question, 'What is religion?' has been shaping itself in the secret chambers of my mind by slow degrees for a long time, until it has grown strong enough to throw off its disguise, and now confronts me in the open, and demands an answer. In other words, I have been unconsciously wandering on the borderland of this question for many a day, and it only required this festival, this lighting of fires, to show me how far I have strayed from the altars of our national gods. And now there are two students—for we have wandered together on the borderland of this new country—novices of the

priesthood, in this royal university, who must at once and forever stop thinking and stop all questioning concerning the nature and authority of the priesthood and religion, or go on questioning to the end. We have come to the parting of the ways. Which one shall we take?"

"You must decide that point, my Mousa."

"That is ever the way with you. You are always starting questions and leaving me to settle them. You are always raising ghosts for me to lay. You lead me to the brink of the river, and then cautiously wait for me to take the first plunge."

"Not so, Mousa mine. You slander me. I never lead the way, I follow blindly your guidance. But I have pretty good eyes, and am sometimes perhaps the first to see where we are. I did not lead you to this broad river of doubt, I meekly followed after; but now that we are here I see its high banks and swift current with greater distinctness, it may be, than yourself. But I followed every step of the journey hither."

"Your ingenuity never fails you and I am always at its mercy. But here we are, as you say, on the banks of this unknown river, and it is fruitless to debate the question of how we came here. Shall we turn back to our own familiar religious land-

marks, or shall we plunge in and breast the strong current of this new stream of thought?"

"I only dare to follow where my Mousa leads the way. Say what you will, call it cowardly if you please, but I shall not so much as put one foot in the waters of this river until you have plunged in and struck out for the other side."

"Your friendship and confidence, my brother, are the dearest things to me in the world. But will you—can you follow a leader who knows not whither he leads?"

"Yes, Mousa mine, I have always, shall always trust you to the full." And then in a lighter vein Prince Rameses turned to his companion with a smile and said, "You see I am indolent as well as cowardly, and throw all the work as well as all the responsibility upon my much abused Mousa."

"But beware, my brother, how you trust the religious leadership of a Hebrew. Remember the fate of Akhenaten; for I feel sure if I should give full rein to my religious bent it would lead me far afield, and probably to a faith—or want of faith—very like that royal heretic, whose religion was, as you know, inherited from my rude and much despised kinsmen, the Hyksos."

"But you seem to forget that I am also related in a way to these shepherds whom we Egyptians

so much abominate. Some of my mother's people came of these barbarous invaders, and I am, as you very well know, said to bear some of the birth-marks of heresy. But I am not so blind a follower as I pretend. Have we not always agreed upon the question of monotheism—and symbolism too, I think? If then monotheism is what you mean by your heresy I am fully with you in thought as well as in spirit; for we have from the first agreed that the Semites have undoubtedly the only rational ground of the supernatural."

"I know! I know!" broke in Mousa with suppressed impetuosity vibrating in every syllable he uttered. "I know we have agreed as you say upon this question of the rational basis of monotheism. But, my brother, is religion primarily, or in any proper sense, a subject of the reason? That is to say, can we reason ourselves into any religious belief? Is not belief the necessary condition of reason? In other words, does not belief come before reason? How can any human being reason about anything in which it does not believe? God must be seen as a fact, and His being must be realized as a truth of our daily experience, before we can reason about His nature. That is in brief a statement of Hebrew theology as I understand it. 'God can be known only by experience: not by theory nor

through symbols,' such is their simple faith. They have naught to do with the refined subtleties of metaphysics on the one hand, nor the sensualities of symbolism on the other. They thus avoid the philosophical wilderness of the learned, and the materialism of the ignorant. Metaphysics leads nowhere, symbolism leads—can only lead to idolatry; for it is impossible for the average mind to discriminate between the symbol and the thing symbolized. But symbolism not only leads to idolatry, it opens the gate to all forms of sensualism and corruption. One can read any meaning into a symbol. All the vices and debaucheries we have seen this night may be, and are, explained away by some symbolic interpretation. This is what troubles me. Every sensual excess, every lustful orgy had a pure origin; every form of dissipation had its beginning in some true sentiment of the heart. Thus upon the sacred memory of the dead is built a system of symbolism which embraces all forms of intemperance, and is revolting to every instinct of decency, to say nothing of purity and love. And yet the priest, 'the guardian of religion,' is silent in the face of this national degradation. Not only this; it is the priest and the priest alone, who is responsible for this state of things. It is to the priestly sanction that the people appeal

for their justification. And look you, my prince, as the people fall lower and sink deeper in vice and misery, the priesthood rises higher and higher in pomp and power."

"Yes, so it seems, and this explains the vast political power the priesthood has acquired. Statecraft and priestcraft go hand in hand, must go hand in hand! For wherever they are divorced there is divided authority——"

"Very true, my prince, but is it necessary to degrade in order to govern a people?"

"Perhaps not. And yet have we not, as you have just said, a very practical example before us this night? As the people have grown weak, has not the government as well as the priesthood grown strong?"

"It seems to be so, and yet it cannot really be. Strength is a relative word. I grant you that as related to its subjects the government grows stronger as they grow weaker; that is, stronger to enforce its authority over their acts and fortunes. But a really strong government cannot be built upon a weak nation. That would be a contradiction in the very nature of things."

"But a government's power is valuable only as it helps to govern. All strength, all power, all authority is relative—at least in this world, and the

strength that a ruler requires is the very strength of which you have spoken—the power to govern his subjects. Without this strength all other power is impotent."

"But you must admit, my prince, that the power necessary to govern a strong people, *i. e.*, a strong nation, must be a greater power than the power required to rule a weak nation. To weaken a people is to weaken a nation: and to weaken a nation is to weaken the real power of the government of that nation. Could a weak nation with an absolute government resist the assault of an enemy with as much force as a strong nation with a relatively strong government?"

"I acknowledge myself beaten, of course. But I claim a share in your triumph, for as usual I provided the subject of discussion and was therefore the immediate cause of your argument."

"I thank you, my brother, for your kind words. But are we not brothers and hold all things in common—at least in the world of the mind and heart? But to return for a moment to the Hebrews. They seem to be a race of people without priests or symbols, and yet their religion is the one controlling power of their lives. What a contrast there is between the Hebrew and the Egyptian. The Egyptian is highly civilized, artistic, refined

and in every way an intellectual being;—in all of which respects the Hebrew is sadly wanting. But the refinement and intellectual superiority of the Egyptian race is not general—it is on the contrary confined to a very few, whilst the great majority of the Egyptian people are in the most abject ignorance, superstition, degradation, and misery. The Hebrews, on the other hand, although deficient in all the arts and sciences, as well as the graces of intellectual culture, are even in their state of slavery a pure, strong, indomitable people, with a pride of race and religion which seems to inspire every one of them,—from the highest to the lowest,—with a fine scorn of the powerful masters who enslave them. This love and pride of race and religion, be it observed, is not a priestly cult, but an all-inspiring passion, which binds them all together in one family with the strong bond of brotherly love, so that the sorrow of the one is the sorrow of all; and the joy of one is the joy of all."

"But are not these the marks of a savage tribe rather than the emblems of a civilized race?"

"I have heretofore so considered them. And I still believe that many of these family traits would disappear with a wider experience of the world, and a deeper knowledge of things. An intense pride of race and religion seems somewhat out of

place, if not ridiculous, among slaves; and I have until now, I fear, seen only that side of it. And this was all very natural. How could I think and feel otherwise? I have been brought up in the royal palace as a brother to the Prince of the House, surrounded with everything that could create a love of culture and refinement, and a contempt for the ignorant and the vulgar. How could I in the very nature of things look upon a race of slaves with any other feeling than contempt? Even after I learnt that these slaves were my kinsmen, my own people, it did not lessen my contempt for them, it only added a keen feeling of shame to contempt. Shame, burning shame, that I should owe my being to such a degraded people. I did not for a long time take the old nurse's tale seriously; nor could I have ever believed it, had not other and stronger evidences of my origin caused me to make earnest and persistent inquiries of all possible sources of knowledge till my Hebrew birth was proven beyond a doubt. But blood will tell, and I cannot forget that one of this hated race of slaves begat me, and another gave me life; and strange to say, what was once shame has changed or is fast changing into a feeling of pride that I, even I—a member of the royal house—am a son of Israel.

"You, my prince and brother, have not been ignorant of these growing sentiments of race and have sympathized with me as only a loving brother could. To you I have made known my hopes and fears—yes, even my love of the despised race. But strangest of all, my people have firmly held to the belief that I shall be finally won back to them. Hardly a week has passed without bringing to me some evidence of this hope. I am in constant receipt, as you know, of written scrolls, of papyrus containing some bits of history or tradition, precept or command, concerning the people of Israel. The simple faith and bald creed of my rude kinsmen amused me at first. I could not, however, remain indifferent to such a simple confidence in my patriotism, and have preserved these writings with a care which now surprises and delights me, for it proves that there has always been, even from the very first, something within me that has responded to these earnest appeals of kindred and religion. I have gone over these documents repeatedly and given you their substance, my brother. They still seem very simple, crude, bald and inadequate statements concerning the nature and character of the Supreme God and His dealings with His creatures. He walks and talks with them in the most commonplace fashion.

"Nor do these historical data, traditions, and religious writings wholly agree in the matters they set forth. But this very lack of outward agreement seems to me at times to be the surest proof of their inherent truthfulness. One thing at least is certain, there can be little doubt of the sincerity and good faith of these various scribes; and they are written with a clearness and a directness that no art could simulate. What, for example, could be simpler, more direct, and withal more sublime than this, 'The Lord our God is one Lord'? There is a majesty, a sublimity about this sentence that lifts it far above the most polished phrase, the most splendid symbol, or the most subtle metaphysical postulate. The one object of the Hebrew religion is to keep this one inspiring thought before the people. What a wonderful thing to have a whole race of people going about from day to day, from year to year, from generation to generation, with this sublime faith in their souls, this all-comprehensive fact forever confronting them."

"True; but Mousa, do not all the educated Egyptians accept the proposition that there is but one supreme God?"

"Yes, we accept as you say 'the proposition,' the metaphysical postulate. But would we dare pro-

claim this doctrine abroad? Would we dare teach it to the people? Would it not be a death blow to the priest and the temple? Was it not the open avowal of some such creed that branded with heresy the Pharaoh Akhenaten?" (Amen-hotep.)

"Yea, verily! And this dark taint of heresy is said to color the blood of our own dynasty, and even our immediate house! Seti, my father's name, has a very heretical sound, for Set is the same as Baal, the god of the Hittites, I think. All the more need therefore that we should be ourselves above suspicion. And yet it is still true that in this royal conservative university monotheism is taught."

"Yes, but how is it taught? As a philosopheme; —that is a philosophical theory only. Are we not also taught that it is a truth to be received and interpreted by the learned only and in secret? It is, as you know, one of the esoteric truths."

"But is it not also true that the great body of the people are incapable of apprehending such a truth?"

"Without patient and long-continued education, yes. But my own race has no difficulty in apprehending and appreciating this fact. But not to discuss the matter at further length, we are fully agreed that the priesthood as at present constituted is unfaithful to its great trust, and should be re-

formed. This we have often discussed, and to-night's orgies impress me with the feeling that the time is almost ripe for action. There is no reason why I should not set about this work at once, or as soon as I am fully inducted into the higher office of the priestly order. I wish this were also true of you, my brother. We could then work together in the future as we have done in the past."

"Well, and what is to hinder us?"

"Your rank, my prince, your royal rank and character."

"But am I not to be the high priest of Egypt also? What more could we desire?"

"Ah, my brother, you must be first and always the pharaoh: and you would greatly endanger your throne were it known that you sought to reform the priesthood. Remember that the priesthood is the strongest prop to the throne, and it would be difficult if not impossible for any pharaoh to stand alone were it taken away, and especially were it to act in opposition to him."

"Your over-caution concerning my interests, Mousa, will I fear fatally hinder any reform you may undertake."

"Your interests must of course be ever my first thought, my prince and brother; and I hope we shall conduct this reform so wisely as not only to

better the general condition of the people, but to strengthen the throne as well. The stability of your dynasty cannot but be strengthened in every way by a reform of the priesthood. But we must keep our own counsels, must do and say nothing to excite suspicion, and above all you must keep wholly apart from any movement or propaganda whatsoever. It must not be possible to trace any act or word or inspiration to you. But the time may come when as high priest of all Egypt you may speak the word that shall abolish forever this night of drunkenness, and all other debasing practices, and establish a religion based on a true morality and a pure form of worship."

"These are great questions, my Mousa. Too great for me to understand at present. But I shall always have you at my side to counsel and support me with your wisdom and your love; for the higher I rise in station and power the closer shall I draw thee to me. We are learners now, let us learn well that we may teach well—and rule well."

"Well said. The duties of a learner call to us now, and we must learn to obey that we may be worthy to command."

The young men embraced each other with more than their accustomed warmth and parted for the night.

It was now very late, but Mousa was restless and feverish, and in no mood to invite sleep. He threw on a loose mantle and wandered forth beyond the university walls into the night. The conversation with Prince Rameses had awakened all the instincts of race within him, and his thoughts were full of his kindred, his brothers and sisters, who were toiling through the long days as slaves of the very pharaoh under whose roof he had grown up and enjoyed all the privileges of a royal son. These were the tragical conditions of his life which he now saw for the first time in their true proportions. He had now reached the point where the struggle of his life was to begin. He was now confronted with the greatest of all human trials—the conflict of duties. He owed the duty of kinship, of race, of blood, to the despised Hebrew slaves. He owed to the pharaoh his life, his careful bringing-up, and all he was or could hope to be. But there was one tie that held him closer than family, race, or religion, it was the bond of brotherly love, the bond of sweet, tender, deep-rooted friendship. This was the tie that held him, would always hold him true to his beloved prince. He could do nothing, would do nothing to weaken this bond. Upon this solid rock of friendship, therefore, he took his stand, and resolved that nothing should prevail against it.

But was not this equivalent to taking his stand against his own people? For his friend was the sole heir to the throne of Egypt. It was this that made the tragedy so dark and deep. But he had never known his people in any personal way, and could not be expected to feel any strong attachment for them. But—and this was the thought that rent his Hebrew heart—their race was his race; the blood that flowed in their veins was the same blood that now pulsed in his own heart. These thoughts sank deep into the soul of this son of Abraham and would not let him rest. He wandered on and on. The fires were burning low; the lamps were flickering; but the people were still wallowing in their own mire. These things recalled to Mousa the fact which he had well-nigh forgotten, that this was the "Festival of the Dead." This thought which brought with it a keen feeling of indignation aroused Mousa from his musings. He looked about him and was stung to the soul in witnessing the low depths to which this once sacred festival had fallen; and he had just turned about to retrace his steps to the university when a hooded figure swiftly approached him, and without pause or ceremony addressed him in the Hebrew tongue:

"Take these papers, son of Amram; they are the last of the documents in our possession setting forth

the history of our race, and of our blessed religion —the religion of our forefathers,—Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Read and meditate upon these things, my brother, and may the time soon come when your mind may be illuminated by the truth that the Lord is one God, and your heart touched by the sorrows of His chosen people,—your own kindred,—who toil as slaves under hard and cruel taskmasters, whilst thou,—the son of Amram,—art feasting and making merry in the king's palace."

So saying, the strange figure glided away as swiftly and silently as it came. This very dramatic incident did not seem to startle or in any way surprise our young student; and he took the roll and listened to the words that were addressed to him as one not wholly unaccustomed to such strange interviews. He did not sleep, however, until he had carefully examined the roll which the mysterious person had placed in his hand. He found upon examination that this last papyrus completed the writings concerning the people of Israel and their unique religion. He placed it in a strong box, together with the other documents he had received for the most part from the same source, and in the same way. They were all arranged in the order in which they had been received, and now formed a more or less connected account of the Hebrew race

and religion. These documents were, to say the least, novel and picturesque, but were regarded by this very keen and discriminating critic as little more than a crude mixture of tradition and fable. Still in spite of his critical faculty, which gave his mind a bent toward incredulity if not skepticism, the simple fact remained that he had somehow or other thought enough of these writings, whatever they might be, not only to read and preserve them, but to annotate them carefully, and arrange them in some sort of chronological sequence. What shall be the final destiny of this strange race of people? had been the constant question presenting itself to this young student's mind, and he closed his eyes in sleep on this festival night, with a confused sort of feeling that a great destiny awaited them and—him.

Mousa closed his eyes as the day was just opening and dreamed a fitful feverish dream. He saw himself the close friend and counsellor of his beloved brother prince, who was now the sole pharaoh and high priest of all the land. Side by side, hand in hand, had his brother and himself advanced in power and splendor, until they had reached the highest point to which earthly greatness could attain. He, the son of Amram, of the despised race of Israel, saw himself in all Egypt second only to

the pharaoh himself. But as this proud thought swelled and throbbed in his bosom, a hooded figure emerged from the outer darkness and passed before him, uttering in a low sad moan these words, "The Lord our God is one Lord, but His chosen people are slaves to Pharaoh, and toil on and on without rest or peace. Oh! thou son of Amram, canst thou, a child of God's chosen race, sit at Pharaoh's table and feast, whilst thy people eat the bread of slavery in sorrow and despair? When shall deliverance come? Who shall bring us redemption but thou, our brother?" The ghostly figure had vanished as the last words were uttered, and they echoed and reëchoed up and down the valley of the Nile, in the awful accents of a superhuman voice, "Who shall bring us redemption but thou, our brother?" These words were still ringing in Mousa's ears, when he awoke with a cold shudder to find Prince Rameses at his bedside, bending over him, smiling down upon him, and playfully chiding him for his laziness in being so sound asleep at such a waking time of day. Prince Rameses was a little startled, however, at the very strange look upon Mousa's face, and hastily enquired if he were well. Mousa closed his eyes and was silent for a moment; he then bounded up and embraced the prince, saying, "Only dreams, my brother—some rather ugly dreams, that is all.

But what are dreams made of? Whence do they come? Whither do they go? Come, tell me, my prince, what do these visions that come to us in dreamland mean or forebode? They must have some meaning, for are they not a part of our lives?"

"Yes, yes, Mousa mine, of course they have a meaning, and the meaning is generally determined by the manner in which one has dined. Good digestion waits upon a good dinner, and dreams on both. Let me see, did we dine well last night? The roast duck, I remember, was exactly to your taste, and the wine was of your favorite vintage. It may have been the fish? But no, for they were brought in alive for our inspection before they were served. Oh! I have it at last! It was the pastry. You are a very naughty boy to have eaten so much after my repeated warnings. Eat more fruit and less pastry, and your dreams will be more cheerful. Now my dinner agreed with me perfectly, and so did my dreams. Shall I tell you what they were?" And without awaiting an answer, he seated himself on the side of the bed and began in an eager and excited manner to relate his dreams. His whole manner was so unusual, so totally unlike the serious air of the previous night, as to cause Mousa some astonishment and concern. He said nothing, however, and the prince began.

"Well, my Mousa, listen to this: I dreamed I was seated on the throne of Egypt as the sole emperor,—with you of course at my side,—when a great procession of kings and emperors from the four corners of the earth filed by, and knelt one by one at the foot of the throne, rendering me homage and worship as the mightiest one of earth. After these kings and emperors had knelt and passed on, there came a vast concourse of people of every race and clime, wearing the badge of servitude in recognition of my universal dominion. Then came magnificently caparisoned war horses, drawing golden chariots loaded with jewels and all manner of precious stones. Last of all came a great company of the most beautiful maidens from all races, draped in the most ravishing fashion, and with downcast eyes and modest mien signified their desire to do my pleasure. Then I awoke, and here I am, feeling as strong and as fresh as the newborn day. That was what my dinner brought me in the way of dreams. But what think you, Mousa mine, were they not rather pleasant? Come, what on earth is the matter? Don't stare at me like that. It isn't polite, you know."

For Mousa's eyes had opened wider and wider as the prince proceeded in narrating his dream of glory, and there was in them an expression of pain-

ful emotion which attracted the attention of his brother. His voice showed hardly less agitation than his eyes. But he made a strong effort to control himself and said, "Ah, my beloved prince and brother, these visions of what might be, often, I fear, create the wish that they may be. But I am sure you can have no real desire to realize such a dream; and yet you told it to me with such an eager look and manner as seemed to bespeak a half conscious wish to experience the power and glory of which you dreamed. Is it not strange that such a vision should have appeared to you just after our earnest talk last night upon the all-important subject of religious reform? I too dreamed of you, my brother, and of your vast power and glory—and yes, of my almost equal share in that power and glory."

"Yes! yes! How strange, how very strange! Come, Mousa mine, tell me! tell me! Is it not odd that we should both have dreamed of the same thing? But why did your dream depress you?"

"Alas! my brother, in the very midst of all our splendor and power and glory, the hooded figure of a Hebrew slave—my own brother in the flesh, the son of my own father—passed before me and cried aloud in the awful accents of a superhuman voice against the cruel oppression of his race! My race,

my kinsmen! my brothers and sisters!—Yes, my people! Oh when will come the day that shall see the cruel fetters which bind my people in wretched slavery struck off forever? I can never be happy till I see their deliverance."

Mousa spoke with great emotion, and Prince Rameses listened with a momentary feeling of annoyance, if not of anger, that his own happy, joyous mood should be repelled by his brother with so much heat, and the grievances of a race of slaves advocated with so much spirit. But this feeling of anger was very slight,—was in fact more of jealousy than anger, and the prince's sympathetic nature quickly responded to the troubled spirit of his beloved Mousa, and he threw his arms about him in a loving long embrace. "Yes, yes, Mousa mine! I know your sorrow is very sore, and I promise you that everything possible, and as soon as possible, shall be done to better the condition of your unfortunate race. I shall urge this matter upon my father, the pharaoh, at once, for your sake, my brother——"

"Yes, my prince, yes! and for the sake of justice, of humanity, of——"

"Come, come, my Mousa! We are beginning rather early in the day to discuss such weighty matters. To break our fast is at this moment

our supreme duty, and I shall await you in the morning-room." And Prince Rameses smiled and, without giving any opportunity for further conversation, walked out of the bedroom and left Mousa to his bather and his barber who were awaiting their master's orders. The barber was the first to perform his duties, and after a plunge in the sacred pool, Mousa's mind became more tranquil, and he dwelt no longer upon the visions of his own feverish dream, nor the evil forebodings of Prince Rameses' dream. But the somewhat hasty, if not abrupt departure of the prince at the sound of the words "justice" and "humanity" did not leave an agreeable impression behind. He dismissed the matter however as a mere coincidence, and when he joined Prince Rameses in the breakfast-room was to all appearances in his accustomed cheerful—albeit thoughtful—mood.

CHAPTER II

THE EGYPTIAN RENAISSANCE

On finishing their course at the university Prince Rameses and Prince Mousa were duly admitted to their full rank in the highest order of the priesthood. This was the first step in the formal assumption of their official rank and authority. The prince had been a nominal joint-ruler since the twelfth year of his age, and he now took his place at his father's side on the throne of Egypt as the actual and responsible joint-ruler of the vast Egyptian empire. But this assumption of supreme power did not remove him in the slightest degree from Prince Mousa. The brothers were as much together as they ever had been—in the palace and the council chamber, as well as in their hours of pleasure and recreation. No secret of family or state did the young pharaoh withhold from his brother friend. Everything else was second to this bond of friendship between these two young men. They would permit nothing, not even the marriage tie, to come between them and this—to them—the most sacred of all ties. As was the custom with

persons of their rank they married very young—if the relationship of the harem can be called by that name, and became, if not happy husbands, at least fond fathers. But none of these family relations were to be compared to their bond of friendship. It would be impossible to say in which of these young men the passion of friendship had sunk deeper. It expressed itself differently in each one of them, and of course in character with their distinct races and temperaments.

Prince Rameses had the characteristic Egyptian traits of good nature and gentleness. His disposition was sweet and cheerful, and his tokens of affection were marked and constant. Mousa, true to his race, was less amiable and more reserved, but withal more intense in his love. A day never passed without each of these friends giving to the other in his own way some unmistakable sign of his unbounded confidence and love. Thus had they grown up together from infancy, and never had there been an act or word to seriously mar or interrupt this free intercourse, friendship, and love. It was this—this remarkable personal attachment—so early and so strongly manifested between the heir to the throne and the son of Amram that had reconciled the Pharaoh Seti I. to the presence of this child of the despised race of

Israel in the royal household, and had finally induced the king to adopt this Hebrew waif in his own family, and give him his own daughter in marriage. But this adoption or promotion of a foreigner by a pharaoh was not wholly an exceptional thing,—which is further proof of the good nature of the Egyptian race. The ancient Egyptians were in fact the most kindly and hospitable people of whom we have any knowledge. They were incapable of fierce hatred, and were the only nation of their time and for many centuries afterward who boasted of their acts of humanity. One of their monuments represents them rescuing their enemies from drowning in the very moment of battle and whilst victory was still uncertain. Even in inflicting punishment the Egyptians were truly actuated more by a purpose of reform than a spirit of vengeance. There could be no surer, stronger proof of the high degree of their civilization than their monument dedicated to Humanity. The fine art and high culture of Greece, the invincible power and splendor of Rome do not bear as sure a witness to civilization as does this one Egyptian monument dedicated to Humanity.

It was then, we may suppose, the tender love of King Seti for his son and heir, together with the natural gentle disposition of his race, that ac-

counts for the son of Amram being brought up in the royal palace with all the privileges of a prince of the blood. In fact so completely had this son of the Hebrew race been received into the royal family that his birth and his people were seldom thought of and never taken into consideration as in any way affecting his fortune or his career as a loyal subject of the pharaoh and a patriotic Egyptian. So that Prince Mousa came and went in the royal palace with all the ease and freedom of a son of the pharaoh; and was admitted to the councils and entrusted with the secrets of the priesthood and the state as fully as if he had been born a son of the reigning monarch, rather than that of a depised race of slaves. Nor did Mousa think of himself otherwise than as a member of the royal family, bound to it by his whole life and education, by his marriage, and his offspring—but above all, and best of all, by the strong sweet tie of friendship which neither life nor death could sever.

It is difficult, perhaps impossible, for us of the modern western world to realize the full force and meaning of such attachments as sometimes existed between men in the far-off ancient world. We have gained immeasurably over the elder civilization of the east in those things that con-

tribute to our personal convenience and comfort and all that goes to make for our material well-being. But in this rapid western march of civilization we have left some things behind; and chief among these things is the gift or genius of friendship. The love of Damon and Pythias, of David and Jonathan, of Prince Rameses and Mousa, seems to our cold and practical minds either an impossible or an insane passion—so wholly foreign is such a sentiment to our civilization, to our manner of life and character. But it is pleasant to believe that such things once were possible to our human race. That there have lived men on this beautiful earth to whom bodily comfort and material well-being—even life itself—were not the supreme good, but that friendship which is love was to them the dearest, the sweetest thing in all the world; that in truth dying for friendship was the only thing worth living for. Thus had lived and loved the Prince of the House of Seti, and Mousa the son of Amram, of the race of Israel.

Both of these princes—for of course Mousa held the rank and received all the honors of a son of the pharaoh—were trained from infancy in the arts of war and statesmanship; and on quitting the university they at once took their natural place at the head of both the council of war and of state,

as well as the priesthood. Prince Rameses as actual joint-ruler and sole heir to the throne was of course next to his father the most exalted personage in all Egypt; but true to his friendship, the higher he rose in authority and power the closer he drew Mousa to him, until it became a saying in Egypt that the son ruled the father, and Prince Mousa ruled the son.

Often did these young princes return to the subject of priestly reform and Hebrew emancipation, and always with the perfect agreement that these were the things that pressed most for their attention and action. But they were not mere enthusiasts—they were in fact growing into wise and deliberate statesmen, knowing very well that to precipitate or even to zealously advocate these reforms would be to excite universal opposition among the priests and all high class Egyptians and might lead to a fatal revolution. They were young and in no hurry and determined therefore to keep their own counsels and to prepare the way for these intended reforms by a system of education to be gradually introduced everywhere, not only in the universities, the schools, the army, and other great departments of the empire, but in the local, social, and every-day affairs of the people. This plan of education included roads, dykes, systems of

irrigation; the housing of the slaves; hours of labor; sanitation; and improved navigation of the Nile, together with popular education in the mechanical arts and sciences. So carefully, so artfully, in fact, was their general scheme of reform conceived and propagated, as to render it impossible for any member of the privileged classes to suspect for one moment that there could lurk within its meaning and scope any danger to their special privileges.

Thus the propaganda caught at once the public eye and secured at once the sanction of all classes. But it was of course not seen and known as a propaganda. This would have defeated it at once. On the contrary it sprang up everywhere at once, without any apparent author or director, and thus had all the signs of spontaneous life and movement, and was everywhere marked by local pride and character. Nothing seemed foreign, all seemed local to each nome throughout Egypt. That is to say, the reforms were always conditioned by the special local wants and circumstances of each district. This was the essential feature of the national movement, or awakening. For the local jealousies of the different nomes, temples, princes and universities were intense, and would have rejected and defeated at once any reform or suggestion of reform

that came to them from a rival nome, prince, temple or university, *i. e.*, from any source outside of their local interests. These local jealousies were not only fatal hindrances to coöperation, but they were continual sources of annoyance and alarm to all the pharaohs. The first important thing, the all-important thing, was to awaken a spirit of national pride and patriotism, and this could only be accomplished by a universal system of education, acting through the local prince, temple and university. It was necessary first of all that persons in positions of authority and influence should have something near at hand to think about and to do. It mattered very little what shape this thinking and acting should take; it was enough that there should be something of universal concern, something apart from their own private and selfish pursuits for men to engage in.

The rich and the privileged class in Egypt were then, as such people always are everywhere, thankful for something to do that should save them from the horrors of *ennui*—of self-boredom—the most dreadful of all human maladies. The healthy mind and body crave employment and the truest philanthropist is not he who gives money but he who provides occupation for his fellows. We of this century are not the first to discover this

capital truth of humanity. The ancient Hebrews knew it better than we know it. All masters of men have known it. Mousa therefore knew that nothing is so pleasing, so satisfying to the great majority of men as the feeling that they are benefactors rather than beneficiaries. That it is better to give than to receive is perhaps the profoundest truth mankind is capable of learning. It was then upon these fundamental and everlasting truths of our common humanity that Mousa, son of Amram and prime minister of Egypt, built the magnificent structure of the Rameses dynasty. For we shall see as we proceed that it was this Hebrew mind that wrought this wondrous work in ancient Egypt. All masters of men have faith in man, for without this faith no man is ever trusted, and a leader must be trusted. Mousa was perfectly fearless in his confidence in men. He believed that men have only to know the best to do the best. Such, briefly stated, were the mainsprings, the natural sources of that great national awakening, which revolutionized the science of government under the dynasty of Rameses the Great and created the golden age of Egyptian history. It is not the purpose of this story, if it were possible for the writer, to explain the various stages of this Egyptian renaissance—for that it was a new birth the

monuments of an earlier age clearly prove. But it may seem unreasonable to suppose it possible that the young pharaoh and his young prime minister (all reformers are young) should have kept their own counsels whilst they gave life and inspiration almost simultaneously to a hundred different reforms in a thousand different places up and down the valley of the Nile.

The Egyptian empire seemed little suited to such a universal propaganda of reform, for it was not a closely compacted or strongly centralized government. On the contrary, it was a loose-jointed confederation of feudal lords, holding sway over baronies, dukedoms, and principalities—each one jealous of all the others, and yielding but a grudging alliance to the supreme sovereignty of the pharaoh. Seldom had a pharaoh been strong enough to establish and maintain his undisputed supremacy throughout the whole land of Egypt; and it is perhaps impossible for us ever to know what dynasties were successive and what contemporaneous. We do know, however, that for a very long time two great contemporaneous dynasties contended for the supremacy of the Nile valley—the one at Memphis and the other at Thebes. The Rameses dynasty became under the statesmanship of Prime Minister Mousa the most

universal of all the royal lines. But it was now in the tentative stage, conscious of its strength yet anxious lest a false step should precipitate a rebellion of one or more of the powerful feudal lords. Such was the situation in the Egyptian empire at this time—a time when Prince Rameses, known to history as Rameses II. and Rameses the Great, began his reign as the sole and supreme sovereign of the whole Egyptian nation.

The prince and the prime minister had been sowing the seeds of this new life long before the death of Seti, and the State, the Church, and the Army, to use modern terms, were already in advanced stages of growth. A very marked "*esprit de corps*" was beginning to be felt throughout these great divisions of the empire, and local jealousies were forgotten in the growing spirit of professional pride and imperial patriotism. Prime Minister Mousa visited every part of the empire, studied the character and ambitions of all persons occupying positions of trust and authority, and made a special point of knowing how they were disposed toward the empire and the reigning dynasty. Instead of trying to weaken the power and authority of the feudal lords, to their great surprise he did everything in his power to strengthen them. This wise policy had the immediate effect of binding all

the petty powers and princes of the nomes to the throne of the pharaoh. Mousa entered into personal and friendly relations with the high priests; studied the special cult of each temple and rendered homage to each local deity.

There existed in almost every nome a special religious cult, founded upon a special local deity; so that an animal, for example, regarded as sacred and worthy of worship in one nome might be, and frequently was, used for food in another. And when we remember that the high priest was usually the prince or governor of the nome, we can well understand how this want of religious unity (for the Egyptians were nothing if not religious) more than anything else hindered the growth of the imperial or centralized power in ancient Egypt. But they were withal free from bigotry and from that fierce zeal which would exclude from office or power those of another race or faith.

That they were a remarkably hospitable people was proven by the fact that the doors of place and power in the Egyptian government were always open to all comers of whatever race, and it was nothing unusual to see Nubians, Syrians, and men of other races in high official authority on the banks of the Nile. This was especially true of the army, and some of the best and most trusted offi-

cers were of foreign descent and even birth. The docility of the Egyptian character lent itself most readily to organization, and thus, whilst the Egyptian soldiers individually were perhaps wanting in bold daring, their superior organization and discipline rendered them equal, if not superior to any of their warlike neighbors. It would be a mistake therefore to suppose that the general light-heartedness and good temper of the Egyptians rendered them contemptible foes. The truth is, these mild-mannered people were capable at times of being wrought up to extreme states of fanatical excitement and ferocity—and worst of all, cruelty. And when they once took a stand they could exhibit an obstinacy of purpose seldom surpassed by any people at any time. From all this it can be understood that an Egyptian army when well organized and ably led was a most powerful military force.

The Egyptians of the Rameses dynasty were celebrated for their riches; but these riches were not, as they never are, an unmixed blessing. They were in fact the source of the greatest anxiety, for they were constantly tempting their neighbors to invade their land in quest of spoils. The great wealth of Egypt became known to the rest of the world, principally through the kindness and hospitality of the Egyptian people. When famine ravaged other lands

and the people cried for bread, there was always corn to be had in Egypt. Of course this traffic was profitable to Egypt, but we are warranted in believing that the Egyptians took pleasure in relieving the pressing wants of their neighbors. "Joseph's brethren are come: and it pleased Pharaoh well, and his servants"—such a little sidelight as this quotation reveals a very large and beautiful side of the Egyptian character.

But in spite of their kindly human sympathy it too often happened that those who came to buy or beg returned ere long in the fierce passion of lust to "spoil the Egyptians." These invaders came sometimes from the upper sources of the Nile, in Nubia and Abyssinia; but they more frequently came from the north and east. They were sometimes composed of half savage tribes, who, after making a sudden foray upon the borders of the Nile valley, would as quickly return to their wild inaccessible fastness in the wilderness to enjoy their plunder. But there were also invasions on a much larger plan of great warlike and civilized nations from Canaan and the region of the Orontes and Euphrates. The Amalekites and the Hittites were the most formidable of these nations, and caused Rameses II. the greatest concern. The Amalekites was a name given to the nearest of Egypt's foes. This name

covered a mongrel nation made up of Arabs, Aramenans, Canaanites, and political refugees from Egypt, Babylon and all the nations round about. The Amalekites had no permanent abode and no land they could call their own, but oscillated between the high lands of Canaan and the Sinaitic Peninsula. They were always on the war path, but with a fluctuating strength, now very powerful and again very weak. They had once invaded and overthrown the native Egyptian pharaoh and placed their leader on the throne. They had in fact but recently been expelled from the Nile valley, after long years of rule as the Hyksos kings. The Amalekites were, therefore, a constant source of menace to Rameses.

But the Hittite nation whose capital was at Kadesh on the Orontes was now the formidable rival of the Egyptian prince and the greatest source of danger. Rameses' father, Seti, had felt the mighty strength of these "Northmen," and Mousa determined that the present pharaoh should profit by his father's experience. It was necessary therefore for its own safety, if for nothing else, that the Rameses dynasty should maintain a powerful army. Mousa knew this better than any one else, for unless the empire were strong enough to protect its weakest vassal

from attack, it could not hope to secure his fealty. The nation as a whole therefore must be strong enough to protect all its parts from outside pressure—else there could be no hope of effecting any internal reform. The work of a life, of a century, might be swept away forever by a successful invasion of the Hittites, or some other great power. The prime minister had thus from the very first seen the importance of a strong army, and had so applied his marvellous power of organization that Rameses II., on assuming the undivided power of the throne, had placed at his command the most powerful army the Egyptian nation had ever known. The great power of the army did not consist however in numbers—for there had been larger armies in Egypt—but in its composition and discipline. It was composed of picked men from every nome of the empire, and officered by the ablest soldiers in the land; men not always of pure Egyptian blood, but always of tried ability and loyalty; and not a few Hebrew names were found in positions of authority. The prime minister was a born commander as well as organizer, and his position was second only to the pharaoh, who was, of course, the commander-in-chief, when he chose to assume the responsibilities of that office.

Prince Mousa, as can be easily seen from what we

already know of him, was in no sense a self-seeker. He had indeed no occasion, if he had had the spirit to be; for no authority or power was withheld from him. He carried Rameses' ring and seal, and his word and act was the word and act of the pharaoh. There were no reservations to the full trust imposed in him, and he was faithful in all respects to the letter and spirit of this trust. So faithful was he that he did not permit his great desire for special reforms to blind him in any degree to the slightest interests of the king. He would have abandoned his cherished reforms at once and forever, had he not believed that they would prove the surest, strongest safeguard of Rameses and his dynasty. Nor would the prime minister do anything to force these reforms—believing that each reform to be healthy must have its rise, growth, and justification in an awakened public spirit.

This was a very new and a very bold theory of statesmanship, and one which King Seti would hardly have approved had it been made known to him. This was a very radical departure from previous policies. It had heretofore been regarded as the wisest state-craft not only to discourage all local and civic spirit, but to encourage local dissensions and jealousies, in order to keep the petty powers weak, for the weakness of the local

powers was supposed to constitute, in some way or other, the strength of the central and imperial government. History seemed to justify such a policy, for in every instance where a local prince had become especially strong, he had become restless under the imperial yoke and often a menace to the throne of the pharaoh. To keep the petty princes of the nomes equally weak was to render them equally harmless. But this Hebrew prime minister saw further and deeper than this merely negative principle of government. He saw in fact that to make the petty powers equally strong was not only to make them equally harmless, but—what was of much more importance—equally helpful to the general government. He saw that a nation made up of weak parts could never become a strong whole: that a government could not possibly be strong and healthy at the centre unless all its parts were strong and healthy.

As grow the parts—the members, of the state—the body politic—so grows the whole nation. This was the universal principle that Prince Mousa applied to the science of government in the far-off Egyptian empire. This seems to us of the present century a self-evident principle. And yet there are not three first-class powers in Europe to-day that have the wisdom and the courage to act upon

this sensible and fundamental fact of all strong government. To keep a nation ignorant is always and everywhere to keep it weak; and Spain and Russia may be taken as illustrations of this self-destructive policy of government. Universal education and coöperation were the foundation stones upon which Prince Mousa sought to build the great and beneficent structure of the Rameses dynasty. It cannot be said, however, that he was always fully conscious of these principles of government. He acted from the intuitions of race as well as from a conscious design, and he therefore builded better than he knew.

As Mousa realized more and more the elevated character and wide scope of his undertaking, he felt more and more that he was the instrument rather than the author of this new spirit of government; he believed that he was the medium through which the "Zeit-geist," the spirit of the time (which is always if rightly interpreted the Spirit of God) was manifesting itself. This half-conscious relation of himself and his mission to the unseen, to the supernatural, was at first a vague and mysterious instinct. But it grew in distinctness and power until it became the clearly recognized and controlling force of his whole being. All great benefactors of their fellow-men have experienced this feeling, this sense

of relationship, of communion with the Infinite Spirit. Mousa did not attempt to identify this force and wisdom as the Spirit of God; but he fully realized and frankly expressed to the pharaoh his belief that it was the Infinite Spirit that was moving over the Egyptian nation, and that he, the emperor, was but the chosen means of its manifestation.

But the prime minister went further, and with true Hebrew courage and faith he assured the pharaoh that if he proved true to his mission the Infinite Spirit would prove true to him, and that the Egyptian nation would become God's people. Of course it was the Egyptian Ra and not the Hebrew Jehovah that Mousa had in mind as the author of this national awakening; and it was to Ra that all prayer and praise should be offered. Still this simple conception and faith in Ra as the supreme and active force in the world was Israelitish and not Egyptian. Thus we see that Mousa had already discarded the elaborate symbolism of the Egyptian religion for the simple faith of Israel. This consciousness of immediate relationship to the Infinite Spirit was peculiar to the Hebrews. The pharaoh did not and could not share this faith with his friend and prime minister; he accepted, however, the fact without experiencing the truth, and was willing to be guided by it in all his acts, for he knew of no other

way of explaining the great changes which had been wrought in so brief a time. Therefore it came to pass that the Pharaoh Rameses II. in the fifth year of his sole reign issued a proclamation concerning the great prosperity and happiness of the nation, and called upon all the people to accept these blessings as the gift of Ra, the creator and father of the Egyptian nation. This could be accepted by the cults of all the temples, as Ra in some form and under some name was everywhere worshipped as the supreme God, whatever the local deity might be.

The issue of the royal proclamation was followed by a royal progress throughout the entire empire that the pharaoh might see and know his people, and however sincerely he disclaimed the character and power of divinity the Egyptians nevertheless received and worshipped him as the incarnation of Ra. This was displeasing if not actually offensive to Rameses at first; but it grew less and less objectionable, and in the end was accepted by the pharaoh with unmistakable emotions of pleasure. This change in the pharaoh did not escape the keen observation of the prime minister, but he was silent. Throughout the royal progress Rameses beheld everywhere evidences of national strength and prosperity which astounded and

thrilled him with a joy no pharaoh had ever felt before. He saw new strength, new life, new hope flowing together in one deep wide river, sweeping away as dead wood all petty strifes and jealousies, uniting in one mighty nation all the people inhabiting the land from Elephantes to Memphis, and from Memphis to the sea. Never before had Egypt been so united, so patriotic, so peaceful. These were the great thoughts that filled the mind of young Rameses. What could he not accomplish with such prosperity and loyalty at his back, and such invincible forces at his command? And as the young pharaoh mused thus his almost forgotten dream of glory floated into dim and mystic outlines before his startled gaze.

CHAPTER III

FRIENDSHIP AND REFORM

THE power of a great idea had fallen upon the son of Amram and would not let him rest, and he began to perceive the nature and conditions of his mission with an intensity peculiar to his race and wholly wanting in the Egyptian character. This want of serious conviction was plainly written in every feature of the amiable Egyptian face. But the Egyptian was wanting not only in earnestness of conviction, he was also sadly lacking in clearness of perception. He was intelligent and resourceful—the most intelligent and resourceful of all ancient people; but he was almost entirely without the logical faculty—the power of ratiocination. Hence it is that we see such utter confusion in his religious thought and life. He held at one and the same time the most conservative and the most radical faith. He never gave up anything he had ever accepted; but did not hesitate to add the most contradictory and irreconcilable statements of fact to his stock of religious beliefs. To give a single,

but a sufficient example: the Egyptians accepted several accounts of creation by as many gods, each one of which was in absolute contradiction to all the others; and yet they did not perceive any incongruity in all these different cosmogonies and theologies.

But whilst the Egyptian had little or no appreciation of abstract truth or virtue, no love of the ideal, he had the keenest possible appreciation of an external, concrete reality. The Egyptian was in fact the most thoroughgoing and consistent materialist the world has ever known, for to the Egyptian matter was the only reality. Mind and spirit without material substance was inconceivable to him. The soul it is true had a quasi-immaterial entity, and could exist apart from the body, as at death. But throughout eternity—such an eternity as was conceivable to the Egyptian—it depended upon the body for life and sustenance. The eternal preservation of the body therefore was a necessary condition of the immortality of the soul. Hence the infinite care with which the body was embalmed and the almost indestructible character of the tomb. The mummy and the tomb bear the strongest possible testimony to the gross sensualism of the Egyptians, and prove that the imagination has no necessary connection with the spiritual.

For the Egyptian was not without imagination; and his imaginative character, together with his naturally mild temper and amiable disposition, gave to his life and conduct the semblance of spiritual virtues which he not only did not possess, but of which he had not the faintest conception. His virtues were almost wholly negative, and whilst he was singularly free from fierce passion, and at times could show the loftiest humanity, he was usually indifferent to pain and misery in others, especially the pain and misery of poverty and slavery.

Prince Mousa knew and counted upon the gentle character of the Egyptians. They were not a fault-finding people, and left him free to solve his problems of state. Moreover, they were not slow to recognize and acclaim an accomplished fact. But a failure was, on the other hand, irreparable. The prime minister had now taken his first step in the advance movement of reform and with such marvellous success that he was universally proclaimed second only to the pharaoh. This confidence and honor given to his prime minister pleased Prince Rameses even more than Prince Mousa, for the pharaoh knew that it gave additional assurance of the loyalty of the people to himself and his dynasty. The great success of Mousa in bringing about the unity

of the Egyptian nation bound him all the closer to the throne.

But his personal relations to the pharaoh were undergoing a change, and the keen satisfaction of Rameses at the success of his prime minister will explain somewhat the different attitudes of these two friends. The pharaoh rejoiced at Prince Mousa's success more on the grounds of friendship than reform, whilst Mousa had come to think more of reform than friendship. He was not conscious of his altered frame of mind and would have resented the imputation as reflecting upon his fidelity, his loyalty to his beloved friend and sovereign; but so it was; and the joy even of his own amazing triumph was much less keenly felt by himself than his friend. And then how could the son of Amram be happy whilst Israel was still in bondage?

But the times were now ripe for the deliverance of his people, and Mousa's soul was stirred to its depths by the strongest and strangest feelings he had ever experienced—feelings he could not express nor explain; feelings not of happiness, but of a deep, solemn, sacred joy that none but a true son of Israel could know. But alas! it has always been the fate of Israel to suffer and to wait. Egypt had now enjoyed a long season of rest from wars and

rumors of wars. The rise and flow of the Nile had not failed for a dozen years to bring seed time and harvest, filling the granaries with corn; and peace and plenty smiled as they had never smiled before upon the land of the pharaohs. But whilst the Egyptians feasted, their rude neighbors of the Upper Nile hungered and came to them for bread. This they readily procured both by barter and service; and their frequent visits and their long days of servitude in the land of plenty revealed to their hungry and covetous eyes the wonderful tokens of wealth in Egypt, and fired them with an uncontrollable lust for plunder.

And so it happened that just as the pharaoh's hand was raised to strike off the chains of Egyptian slavery, it was stayed by one of those sudden invasions to which Egypt was always subject: and as it had frequently happened before, Egypt had brought this curse upon herself by feeding her hungry neighbors. But the greedy and untrained eyes of the Nubians had failed to discern the tokens of unity and strength as well as wealth. They failed to see that if the soldiers were not so numerous as in former times, they were better trained and officered; that if there was not so much outward display of strength there was vastly more real power; that if there were fewer authorities,

there was much firmer authority. Moreover, these wild tribes could not understand how the successful pursuit of husbandry and the gentle arts of peace could go hand in hand with the bold courage and fierce daring of successful war. They had a very rude awakening, however, for never before in the history of Egypt had an invasion been so abruptly checked, and so effectually hurled back.

But the Egyptians were not content as heretofore to stop at their own borders. They pursued the foe unrelentingly—they carried the war into Africa, into the very heart of the country, and exacted a hard tribute of all that the Nubians possessed. Many slaves were of course included in these spoils of war, and it thus came about by an irony of fate so often seen in the history of the world, that the more perfect the immediate success, the more distant the ultimate goal. The brilliant success of Prince Mousa at the head of the Egyptian army resulted in increasing enormously the slave population, at the very time that his heart was fixed upon emancipation.

The pharaoh and the prime minister were side by side from the beginning to the end of this short and decisive war. It was a new and a most exciting experience for both. Prince Mousa was naturally anxious to know how the new army

which was the work of his own hands would answer to his plans and his hopes. The pharaoh was no less anxious on many accounts. It was an opportunity of testing both the strength of the new army and the skill of its creator and commander. Rameses was charmed and amazed at the perfect order and discipline of his troops, and the marvellous swiftness and the irresistible force with which they struck the foe. As the Egyptian army passed its own frontier and advanced into the enemy's country there was seen for the first time in all history a column with four fronts, *i. e.*, without flanks or rear; for this was the first time the hollow square formation had ever been used.

It might seem strange that Prince Mousa, now the unmistakable hero of all Egypt, the greatest general the nation had ever known, could not gratify his burning desire to free his race; and yet such was the fact. The conditions of hero worship are the most delicate and unstable of all the things of this world. Prince Mousa was universally acclaimed the most powerful personage in all Egypt —hardly second to Rameses himself—and yet he was utterly powerless, even with the aid of the pharaoh, to loose the chains that held his own race —his own brothers and sisters in slavery. How vain, how impotent, how mocking was all his

vaunted honor, authority, and power if he could not lift a hand to help his own people. And so, whilst he was hailed as the mightiest hero of the mightiest nation in the world, away down in his Hebrew heart he felt a woe that turned all his joy into unutterable sadness—a sadness and a sorrow all the more agonizing for the reason that it had to be borne in silence, in the midst of universal rejoicings.

But why was the prime minister of Egypt so powerless to help his people? Slavery was the universal practice of all nations, and for the victorious general to have denied his soldiers slaves, which were the chief spoils of war, would have been quite impossible. General emancipation, therefore, was entirely out of the question, and to have made an exception in favor of the despised Hebrews would have revealed the prime minister's origin to the whole nation, and declared his personal sympathy with the descendants of a hated race of alien kings, who had tried to subvert the national religion of Egypt, and establish a foreign cult founded upon a strange God who could neither be seen nor symbolized. This, to the practical and materialistic Egyptian mind, meant bald infidelity. Had, therefore, the prime minister shown any special favor to his own race, this universal hero worship would have

instantly ceased; and the popular applause would have been changed into cries of "Down with him!"

The Hebrews, it must be remembered, were no ordinary slaves. They were not scattered up and down the valley of the Nile as were other slaves. They were regarded as the descendants of a foreign and barbarous line of kings,—the Hyksos,—who had not only invaded and conquered Egypt—that might have been forgiven them—but had torn down the national altars, and sought to place a strange god in their temples,—and that could not be forgiven. Such were the traditions known to all Egyptians concerning a race of slaves called Hebrews—the only slaves held together as a distinct race. The Hebrews were kept by themselves for two reasons: first, that they might be the more easily identified in case they should attempt any political agitation; and second, that they might not contaminate the native Egyptians with the leprosy of their heresy. They were called an unclean race by reason of their alien religion, and not on account of their habits of life. They were religious, not physical lepers. The land of Goshen was then the first ghetto of the Hebrews, and it is perhaps to this far-off ancient Egyptian ghetto that they owe their unquenchable love of race and religion, for nothing can unite a race, a people, so firmly together in mind and heart

as common adversity. These long years of slavery in the land of Goshen did more to unite the Hebrew race than any number of years of unlimited prosperity could have done.

There were, as we have seen, many individual exceptions of this exclusive treatment of the Hebrews. But they were a proscribed race, and the prime minister knew he was powerless at this time to help them. He kept his thoughts and his sorrow to himself, for the time had now come when he could not express them to his brother friend, the pharaoh. Little did his own people realize the great sorrow of his soul; and they increased his suffering an hundredfold by upbraiding him with disloyalty to his race and his religion. Not only this, but they charged him as the prime minister with being their real oppressor. This was natural, for they could not but think that, with his supreme power, if he would but say the word they should be free to pursue their own course of life, and to worship their God in their own way, and at their own appointed times.

This belief of the Hebrews in the unqualified power of the prime minister added the bitterest dregs to his cup of sorrow. He could not explain, he could not speak one word in his own defence to his own people, he could only endure in

patience and be still. And never in all this world—save once—was such a heart so full of silent sorrow, and never in all this world—save once—did such a supremely unselfish purpose enter in and possess a human being. From this moment Prince Mousa determined that all things within his power should work together for the ultimate and absolute freedom of his race. He resolved that nothing should hinder this purpose. Every tie of earth—wife, child, yes, the sacred tie of friendship—must be broken if needs be, that he might accomplish his mission to his race, and as he dimly felt, to humanity,—a mission committed to him by the God of his fathers—Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

And so, in heavy sorrow of soul, did this son of Amram take up the burden of his race, cheered only by the growing consciousness that he was the human instrument of a divine purpose. This new thought, this kindling idea, was now and forevermore to be his constant companion. So real in fact did this inner companionship become, as to make all outward relationships mere shadows in comparison; so clear and distinct grew the voice within, as to render all outward human speech but the hollow echo of reality. There was little or no outward sign of this mighty inward change except a growing habit of silence, which in time begat a

halting utterance. But this caused little remark, as it was attributed to the prime minister's increasing cares and responsibilities.

The pharaoh would doubtless have seen and felt this change in his friend, but for the reason that a revolution was taking place in his own life and character. There is no glory like unto the glory of victorious war. The young Rameses had now tasted the cup of this glory, and longed to drink a deeper draught. But it was not only the joy of victory that thrilled the pharaoh. The excitement of actual conflict was even a stronger element in his now half-suppressed, half-confessed love of war. Rameses was, as we have seen, of mixed blood, and it is only by taking full account of this fact that we shall be able to understand his very complex nature of philosopher, statesman, warrior and, it may be, voluptuary and tyrant. Let us, therefore, look once more at him as he is now to be seen in the glory of a first triumphant war; in the knowledge of a firmly-united nation, of his supreme authority over its mighty forces, and in the first full consciousness of where these mighty forces could place him among the rulers of the world, if he but chose to wield them.

Rameses was, when we saw him in his student quarters, a very beautiful youth—tall and straight, and

well-formed, with good features and a kindly, handsome face. His figure as we now see him is in better proportion, and more muscular. His hands and feet have not lost their delicate mould, but have developed lines of strength which add greatly to the sense of physical power which is evident in every motion of his graceful body. His hair, which was of a deep red color in youth, has grown darker, and is now only tinged with red. His head is long and straight, rather than round, and his nostrils and lips are full—much fuller, in fact, than his early youth gave promise. We thus recognize in outward form and features the marks both of the Egyptian and the Semitic, and we see, what was not so evident in his youth—that the Egyptian is the preponderating element in his nature. His energy, his enthusiasm, his ability to take quick and decisive action are Semitic; his royal pride, his amiability, his love of luxury, of splendor, and especially of authority, are oriental and Egyptian. Rameses' strong sensuality, of which he is not yet fully aware, but which is clearly symbolized in his lips and nostrils, is the resultant of the commingling of the blood of the Asiatic and African races; and is the most potent element in his character.

Rameses felt a change taking place in him with mingled feelings of joy and fear. He meant

to rule with wisdom and justice, and was sincere in his wish to make his subjects prosperous and happy. He was still somewhat of a philosopher, and, like all philosophers, believed that religion was an intuitive concept of the mind, and necessary to the life of man. He had dwelt upon these things early in life, and they had become a part of his thought, but not of his real life and character. The son of Pharaoh, indeed, owed these thoughts and sentiments, not to any innate principle or natural inward bent, but to the outward circumstances of his life and companionship with his beloved Mousa; but the unconscious instincts of blood, and race, and rank, had more than once disturbed his better thoughts with their very unphilosophical suggestions; and they now appeared before him with the startling intimation that he should use the invincible forces at his command for power, and glory, and dominion.

And why not? This would not render his people less prosperous or happy, but on the contrary all the more so, for every Egyptian would share with him his glory and dominion. More than that—did he not owe it to his dynasty? Especially, did he not owe all possible glory and dominion to the princes and priests of the land, who had given such splendid assurances of

their patriotism and loyalty to the Rameses dynasty? And the more splendid, and the wider the dominion of that dynasty, the greater the dignity and importance of every Egyptian, from the highest priest and prince to the lowest fellah. That this was sound reasoning, and wise statesmanship, would hardly be questioned even to-day, after many thousand years of experience. People, as well as princes, demand that their kings and emperors, their presidents and chief representatives, shall live in splendor, and assert a wide dominion. It was not difficult, therefore, for Rameses to reason himself into the belief that universal empire was his duty, rather than his pleasure; that it was, in fact, his manifest destiny.

And so it certainly appeared to be; and so we see how it happened that the two brother-friends came to the parting of the ways,—the one to follow the leadings of a great idea, the call of God to the service of his race and humanity; the other to pursue a course of power and splendor and dominion. But the parting of the ways was not a conscious act on the part of either of these great personages, and nothing occurred to interrupt the outward course of their lifelong friendship. In fact each one, now that he believed he had a great mission to fulfil, felt all the more need of the

other; and so completely was each absorbed in his own plans as to find little time to scrutinize each other's aims. Prince Mousa knew that the stronger the empire and the more absolute the pharaoh, the better were his chances of finally liberating his people; and Rameses realized more and more what he owed to the prime minister, and was fully aware that all the praise and authority given to Prince Mousa resulted in strengthening his own hands, for nothing could have made him doubt for one moment the incorruptible loyalty of his great minister. If therefore the cords of friendship were unconsciously loosened between the son of Seti and the son of Amram, these two men were still held closely together by the consciousness that they were necessary to each other.

CHAPTER IV

BETHEL

Mousa's heart was now firmly fixed upon the deliverance of his people, and he was ready to make any sacrifice, however great, in the pursuit of his supreme purpose. It was in this spirit of self-surrender and patriotic enthusiasm that he turned anew to the writings of the Hebrew scribes which he had acquired in so mysterious a manner. But what a change had come over them! He had once thought them hard and crude and childish. But now every word glowed with life and beauty. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and Juda were no longer mere names, but living, breathing men, standing out in the foreground of the Hebrew race with a reality, a distinctness, a dignity, and withal a grandeur, that startled and enraptured him. As he read the simple story he breathed the pure atmosphere of the hills and the valleys of Canaan. He heard the brooks babbling, the birds singing, and saw the herds peacefully feeding. There was Bethel, and the tent of Abraham; and there the

altar he dedicated to his God—a rude altar of rough stones without an image or a symbol. How simple! how peaceful! how human!

What a change from the arid and narrow and crowded valley of the Nile, with the hot rays of the sun forever beating down upon it, where towns, and temples, and tombs were mingled together in strange confusion: where the towering and gloomy pyramids bore silent witness to centuries of human toil and oppression, and unutterable woe: and where the pitiless face of the Sphinx looked out over all, with her calm indifference to the awful riddle of life—caring neither for things human nor things divine. This was Egypt, and Egypt meant civilization; it meant art and science and philosophy, and everything expressed by the words intelligence, refinement and culture. Bethel meant none of these things. It only served to mark the resting-place of a wandering Arab tribe. Was that all? No, that was not all: it meant something more than that now to Prince Mousa. It meant God and it meant man,—and Mousa gazed with awe upon the altar at Bethel as a witness to the fact that Abraham believed in God and it was counted to him for righteousness. He believed in God as his Father who had paternal relations with him.

That was what Bethel now meant to the awakened mind and heart of the son of Amram; and as he read and pondered, he began to realize that faith himself; he began to feel that he was now standing at the source of his race and his religion. And he could see in his mind's eye the clear, cool, fresh stream as it issued out, trickling from the rough stones of the altar at Bethel and flowing, with deepening and widening current, through the green hills and valleys of Canaan, on and on, till alas! it was lost in the burning sands of Egypt. He saw Abraham as he walked amidst his flocks and herds, or sat at his tent door looking out over the fair scene of hill, dale and mountain, or gazing up into the starry sky, listening for the voice of God. And Mousa heard that voice speaking to Abraham out of the blue vault of heaven and saying to him, "I am the Almighty God: walk thou before Me and be thou perfect." "Look up and tell the stars if thou be able to number them, so shall thy seed be."

Mousa could understand now how real was this voice to the spiritual ear of Abraham—how possible, how reasonable, how necessary it was for man to hold intercourse with God: and he felt that henceforth he was to enjoy that intercourse. In fact he now realized that God

had already spoken to him in the clearest possible voice, and he would obey that voice. And with this great thought pulsing in his brain, this great joy in his heart, Mousa turned from these writings, and from the vision they had brought him. He turned away from the green hills of Canaan, and the silent stones of the altar at Bethel to the din and toil, to the heat and noise, to the pomp and show, to the tombs and temples of the priests, to the Pyramids and the Sphinx, to the luxury and splendor, the degradation and misery of Egypt, and to his duties and great responsibilities as the prime minister of the pharaoh, and the commander-in-chief of his great army.

Prince Mousa turned from this vision of his race, his religion, his God, with a sigh, but with resolute purpose written in every line of his face, and so strong was his power of concentration as to shut out for the time being everything but his immediate duties as the prime minister of Egypt. And these duties were now calling to him in a loud voice. The Hittites, the oldest and strongest foes of Egypt, were assuming a very hostile attitude, and it was necessary that the Egyptian army be placed at once upon a war footing. This one thing now occupied Prince Mousa to the exclusion of every other thought, for it was his nature to give

himself wholly to whatever he had in hand. This threatening attitude of the Hittites was the most serious matter he had yet confronted. He knew from the first he would have to try conclusions with this great nation some time or other, but he had hoped it might not be for some years; and that it might not be, he had made special efforts to maintain the most friendly relations with this Semitic power.

On the other hand, the Hittite king was not ignorant of the great strides the Egyptian nation was making in power and property. Every trader, every traveller returning from the Nile brought the most glowing accounts of the unity, the strength, and the wealth of Egypt. The reports of the increasing wealth and the genuine prosperity of the Nile nation did not disturb the Hittite king; but the accounts of the unprecedented unity of the people and the concentration of all power in the hands of the pharaoh were more alarming; and now that the brilliant Nubian campaign had revealed the Egyptian army to him as a power he would have to reckon with sooner or later, he wisely determined to have this reckoning sooner rather than later.

The Hittite sovereign made no pretense of having a grievance against the young pharaoh—received all

his friendly overtures in fact with expressions of the most cordial good will: but he made all the greater efforts for an immediate war against him; and had begun his march toward the delta before he gave the pharaoh any intimation of his purpose. But Prince Mousa had other agents than messengers of peace at the Hittite court, and through them he learned of the war preparations, and was not, therefore, caught unprepared. Still Mousa did not want a war with the Hittites at this time, for he knew that it would absorb all other interests, and tax the strength of the nation to the uttermost—a strength, to be sure, in which he placed the greatest possible reliance; but it was a new strength, and as yet hardly conscious of itself, and it would require time and experience to give it the sure confidence which can only come through oft-repeated victory. The Nubian campaign had done much toward creating such a feeling, but would this newly created confidence be able to withstand the valor of the Hittites, the finest soldiers of the world? Mousa believed it would; he believed his army would be able to defeat the mighty foe; but he knew it would require all the resources of the nation, and all his skill as a general.

We know little about the Hittites, except that they were one of the most powerful races, or na-

tions, of the ancient world. Their capital was on the Orontes, and represented a state of civilization hardly inferior to that of Egypt itself. It is possible that this great Semitic power was even older than the Egyptian or the Babylonian. In any case, these were the three oldest and mightiest nations of the world; and they watched each other with mingled feelings of jealousy and fear; for they had learned by many hard fought battles to respect one another's prowess. They had also learned many valuable lessons from each other. Egypt, for example, had taught the Hittites much in art, in letters, and commerce; whilst the Hittites in return had taught the Egyptians the science of war and government. And what now disturbed the Hittite king more than anything else was the report that the Egyptians had broken away from their Hittite masters—had in fact made a radical departure from the tried and established laws of warfare, and organized their army on an entirely new plan. But what these new military tactics were he could not learn with any degree of certainty.

The fame of Prince Mousa, the author of this new system and the commander of the Egyptian army, had of course reached the Hittite capital, and with it had come many stories concerning his birth and race. One of these stories gave to Prince

Mousa a supernatural origin, declaring that he was nothing less than the son of the god of the Nile; that he was conceived and born of the river, and was found floating upon its bosom by a favorite sister of the pharaoh; was adopted into the royal family by the pharaoh himself. This was certainly enough to excite the interest of the Hittite king, and he may have been moved by a feeling of curiosity as well as fear in urging this war against Egypt; for curiosity has played a much greater part in making the history of the world than appears from the records.

But whatever the immediate cause, it came to pass in the fourth year of the reign of Rameses II. that his great rival, the Hittite king, set out from the banks of the Orontes for the land of the pharaohs, at the head of his great army—an army of seasoned veterans accustomed to easy victory and eager to spoil the Egyptians. For what booty might not be found in the rich valley of the Nile? The king rode for the most part at the head of his army on a richly caparisoned Arab steed. The march was uninterrupted till the army had traversed the high narrow passes on the rocky shores of the Mediterranean. But as the Hittites advanced into the country of the Canaanites and the city and plains of Gaza came into view, the king exchanged

his beautiful Arab charger for his war chariot, drawn by the larger and stronger breed of horses found in Canaan. The Hittite army contained thousands of these war chariots, blazing with silver and gold and precious stones. Each chariot drew but a single warrior and his charioteer or driver, and these warriors were the nobles or picked men of the nation and always occupied the post of honor—which was the post of danger.

The Canaanites were now the allies, or rather the vassals, of the Egyptian empire; but notwithstanding this fact their great city of Gaza threw open its gates to the Hittites with a noisy welcome, and gladly supplied the army with whatever it required—being sure of more than a just recompense, now that their friendship was courted. It was found necessary that the army should halt here many days to repair the damages wrought by the long march. Gaza was the principal seat both of the chariot trade, and the horse market of the east, and the Canaanites supplied not only their allies with these implements of war, but they did even a greater business with the Hittites. They had—fortunately for their own pockets—just sent off a very large order both of horses and chariots to the young pharaoh. In fact, there were still some of the Egyptian traders or buy-

ers in Gaza when the approach of the Hittite army was announced; and this announcement very naturally hastened their departure and quickened their journey homeward; and it was not long before the pharaoh and his prime minister were in possession of the important, and truth to say, unwelcome news. But they kept their own counsel, and appeared to welcome a war with this their greatest enemy as furnishing a fine chance for the display of the superior valor and strength of their army. Every officer, high and low, throughout the army was made to feel this, and to inspire his men with the same enthusiasm, and never did a pharaoh lead a better disciplined, a more loyal, or a more confident army against a foe. Prince Mousa knew all his officers by name and appealed to each one individually to obey strictly his orders and victory was certain. Never before were a general and his army so confident of each other: and the march was begun with a hope and a good cheer that lightened every burden and quickened every step; and the Hittites had hardly left Gaza a day's march behind them, when to their utter amazement they were confronted by the Egyptians in battle array.

As soon as Prince Mousa discovered the enemy he formed his army into a hollow square, and with this compact and swiftly moving column advanced

to the attack. The young pharaoh was in the centre and front of the advancing line, and directed his charioteer to drive hard for the Hittite king. This was the universal custom in all warfare, for a battle was supposed to be a personal encounter between the two contending sovereigns; and a king or emperor who failed to head the charge lost the confidence of his own army and the respect of the enemy. Mousa knew that this universal sentiment could not be disregarded, and he had consented to the urgent plea of the pharaoh and permitted him to take the post of danger and, as it were, to force the fighting. But Mousa took up his own position in the centre of the square, where he could command a complete view of the battle. This was the novel feature of the Egyptian tactics. Never before had the commanding general in the time of battle occupied a place of comparative safety.

This would have been fatal to any one else than Prince Mousa. But he had the rare courage to disregard appearances and to act solely for the good of all; and that he did act at all times for the very best of his army and without any thought of self, every soldier knew. They had seen his personal courage tried in the Nubian campaign, and they believed their commander would make any personal hazard or sacrifice

necessary to victory, but that under no circumstances would he make a needless exhibition of his own bravery. In a word, the army trusted Prince Mousa to the full, and when he took up his post in a place of comparative safety, all the soldiers knew it was their safety he was considering and not his own.

During the battle Mousa never for a moment lost sight of the pharaoh's standard, and kept the whole army in immediate touch with King Rameses. So constant was this support that every movement of the pharaoh was instantly responded to by the weight of the whole Egyptian line, which slowly but surely forged its way through the Hittite ranks, and the proud king was forced to yield little by little to the steady advance of his youthful foe.

The time at last came when the Hittites realized that they must make some extra endeavor if they hoped to win, and this gave their famous horsemen an opportunity to play their part. Detaching themselves from the main line they swung off in a sort of half circle, and like a clap of thunder threw themselves on the Egyptian left flank. But to their amazement the left flank proved to be a front line, strong, and steady, and indestructible; and it seemed to these veteran horsemen that a new army had suddenly come into the field. They made

charge after charge with even more than their accustomed valor, but were compelled to retire, and at last to retreat. They now endeavored to regain the Hittite line, but found that they were completely cut off.

Prince Mousa had up to this point held his square intact, and he now saw that the time had come for him to strike his hardest blow; and, breaking his square he advanced his rear line to the support of his left, and his right to the support of his centre, and gave the order for a quick advance movement in solid column. The young pharaoh now felt himself lifted up and borne along on the crest of a great wave, and his enthusiasm knew no bounds. Springing from his chariot he bounded forward into the very midst of the Hittites, and with his faithful lion as his only attendant, fought single-handed and alone till the battle was won.

The Hittite king was however able to save his army from destruction, and in spite of every effort of the Egyptians he succeeded in retreating within the gates of Gaza. This showed the Egyptians the indomitable character of their foe, and convinced Prince Mousa that the war would be a protracted one. The young pharaoh had greatly distinguished himself, and was now the idol of the army. But he generously attributed the victory not to his own

personal valor, but to the bravery of the whole army and especially to the great generalship of Prince Mousa, whom he placed at his right hand, and proclaimed him his brother and dearest friend. This battle was a great but indecisive victory, and the war lasted for several years. The Hittites during this long war never succeeded in reaching the valley of the Nile; and the Egyptians never saw the banks of the Orontes. The Egyptian army did however succeed in reaching the plains of Esdraelon, where a last great battle was fought. In this last battle, as in the first, the Egyptians gained a nominal victory.

But the pharaoh was now glad to end the war by forming an alliance with his resolute foe, and as evidence of his good faith he received in marriage a daughter of the Hittite king. The long war taxed the entire energies of Egypt to their uttermost extent, and during its progress very little else was thought about. All idea of reform was given up for the time being. At first Prince Mousa regarded this as a very grave misfortune. But as time progressed he saw that there were some compensations for this loss. This long strain tested the unity and loyalty of the whole nation as nothing else could have done; and it also resulted in lessening the hardships of the serfs and slaves, many of

whom served in the army,—and the others were left to themselves more or less and were only required to do a reasonable share in maintaining the army in the field. Mild measures were therefore necessary, for it was quite impossible for the government to conduct a great foreign war and at the same time to enforce cruel, or even severe laws of labor upon the serving multitude at home. But these mild measures were also the result of a wise state policy; for the government very naturally desired to avoid anything that might create discontent among the great mass of its subjects.

Whilst therefore any idea of the active propaganda was wholly out of the question it nevertheless came to pass that the Hittite war did more for the enlightenment of the whole Egyptian people, and hence for the general spirit of reform, than an equal number of peaceful years could have accomplished. The serfs and the slaves in the army found themselves on an almost equal footing with the freemen of the land; and the fellahin and craftsmen at home were to a very great degree freed from the lash of the hard taskmaster. The Hebrews shared of course in this universal amelioration, and having once experienced the joys of freedom, the blood of their fathers stirred within them and never again did they passively accept a condition of slavery.

Thus it happened that this most unwelcome war to Prince Mousa helped his mission in a way, and to a degree that nothing else could have done. It was a long time, however, before he saw and realized that this war was a blessing to his race, and he then accepted it as one of the means of God for the fulfilment of his mission. He saw now that his people needed to be trained before they could understand and enjoy the blessings of freedom. He also became conscious that he himself required more discipline, experience, and above all, more faith. And he had now to learn the greatest and the hardest of all lessons, that man's ways are not God's ways.

CHAPTER V

THE HITTITE QUEEN

ALTHOUGH the long war had been a severe strain upon the resources of Egypt, yet the general result was to greatly increase the wealth and prosperity of the whole nation. Everybody and everything seemed to share in this general improvement, from the pharaoh to the fellah. Never before did a pharaoh surround himself with so many of the princes and nobles of the land; and the court of Rameses at the close of the long war contained perhaps the most brilliant and distinguished assemblage of men the world had ever seen. The new and beautiful Hittite wife of the pharaoh was not only amazed by the splendor which everywhere met her gaze, but she was completely dazzled by the multitude of handsome courtiers who were continually paying her the most delicate and the most flattering compliments. She enjoyed this luxury and splendor and worship with a naïveté that was very pleasing to the pharaoh, and he did everything in his power to minister to her pleasure

—for he loved this dark Hittite beauty as he never had loved before. She was not so refined as the royal princess of Egypt, but she had a quicker wit and a much livelier fancy. The Egyptian wives of the pharaoh were taller and more graceful than their foreign rival; but her figure was of a rounder mould, and there was a spring in her step, an elasticity in her motion, a fire in her black eyes, a glow in her olive skin, before which the yellow, languid, Egyptian beauties paled their ineffectual fires. And then, unlike the thin-blooded, passive Egyptian women, she gave love for love, full measure pressed down and running over. And to crown all she was keenly jealous of the pharaoh's love. This it was more than anything else that distinguished her from the Egyptian women, and excited most the pharaoh's interest, for no woman had ever before ventured to show to the pharaoh the signs,—if they felt the pangs,—of jealousy. This absence of jealousy bespoke an indifference which was the characteristic trait of the Egyptian women. But there was a spark of Semitic fire in the pharaoh's blood, and this Hittite beauty was the first to kindle it; and it now blazed up in a great flame of passion, for this new wife had awakened a new life within him. Hers was a strong sensual nature, and she stirred to the very depth the passionate

nature of Rameses as it had never been stirred before; and so to this foreign woman, more than all things else, may be attributed the very radical change which now took place in the character of Rameses.

This change at first sight seemed almost wholly for the better. The king became less stern and more amiable, and his face wore an expression of extreme kindness. To his courtiers he became more indulgent, and to the masses more gentle. He began also to think more of the pleasures of the people, and less of their duties. It was therefore to all outward seeming a strong, active, aggressive, and withal a keenly joyous life that this new love brought with it to the pharaoh. It created new ambitions, new ideals, new visions. And the pharaoh became intensely interested in the cultivation of art, and music, and literature—everything in fact that could minister to his growing sense of the beautiful. He began to feel that every sentiment, every passion of humanity, should have some outward symbol in form or color or melody. Painters and poets, architects and sculptors, musicians and actors soon thronged the Egyptian court; and it was not long before temples, and tombs, and statues dotted not only the valley of the Nile and the delta, but many outlying districts,

—and especially the scenes of the battles of the late war. These statues were seen even to the very boundaries of the Hittite empire.

The glory of the young pharaoh, and the Rameses dynasty, was of course the inevitable subject of the painter and the poet, the sculptor and the architect. All ranks and orders and classes joined in this glorification of the pharaoh—a glorification which the priests skilfully turned into a veritable deification and worship; and Rameses II. was at last proclaimed the *Incarnation of Ra*, and took his place amongst the gods of Egypt.

The apotheosis of Rameses II. took place, singularly enough, on the day of the great "Festival of the Dead," which was also a day for the special worship of all the gods; and was followed by a night of dissipation the like of which had never before been witnessed. This was a very startling coincidence, and could not but recall to the pharaoh his youthful plans and pledges of priestly reform. But these thoughts, strange to say, caused him no regrets but only amusement; for he now considered them as mere boyish fancies,—so completely had he come under the spell of power and glory and sensual infatuation. The deification ceremonies took place in the temple at Tanis, and having ended the divine pharaoh and his court returned

to the royal palace, where they might shut out the sights and sounds of the revolting orgies of the people—orgies which knew no bounds of indecency, impurity, and debauchery.

But amidst the brilliant throngs of priests, courtiers, and worshippers there was one sad and sorrowful face that confronted the pharaoh wherever he turned; until, stung by it into uncontrollable anger, he boldly met the gaze of his prime minister and with a mocking smile which expressed his utmost contempt, the pharaoh raised his cup and said, "Mousa mine, let us drink to the reform of the priesthood!" "No, my prince, shall we not rather drink to this fulfillment of your youthful dream of glory?" was the response. The pharaoh's first impulse was to dash his cup into Prince Mousa's face as the only fitting reply to this more than rude taunt. But he instantly recovered himself and in his gentlest manner said, "Just as you like, Mousa mine"—and thus the son of Amram and the son of Pharaoh drank to its last dregs the cup of their friendship.

Prince Mousa had for some time been fully conscious of the change the character of Prince Rameses was undergoing; but he knew that he was now unable to do anything to check it, and the time had come when he must cease even to try to check it.

He was still, however, the prime minister of Egypt. He was the victorious general of the greatest war the world had ever known, and the whole nation paid him the respect and honor due to his rank and services. But he was no longer the sole confidant of the pharaoh,—not even one of his confidants. The new wife had come between them, and her jealousy, which at first merely hindered, had at last destroyed the old-time intimacy, and even friendship of the two brothers. The court, the army, and even the mass of the people became aware in time of these changed relations between the pharaoh and the prime minister, and in many little ways and in many little things, they made Prince Mousa feel that they knew he was in disgrace. But little did he care for these petty marks of disrespect, for his mind and heart were troubled by much weightier matters,—matters which had to do with his race and his religion, and Mousa began to feel for the first time in his life that he was a stranger in the land of Egypt, and a sojourner amongst a hostile people, and that he must quit the court and the pharaoh and the Egyptian nation, and go to his own race and his own kinsmen, where he could worship his God in peace. He knew that this course would be opposed by the pharaoh ; but he believed that in time he should be able to withdraw from a

people and from scenes that for the future could only be hateful to him.

As has already been seen, the servitude of the Hebrews was now of a very mild nature—so mild indeed as hardly to be called slavery. Mousa felt therefore that their national freedom would be only a matter of time; and with that patience which all supremely great men possess, he was willing to work and wait, believing that the time would come when his mission should be fulfilled and he would lead the children of Israel back to the land of Canaan—back to the peaceful hills and valleys and brooks, where their father Abraham watched his flocks and herds, and in the cool of the evening sat in his tent door and gazing into the starry heavens listened to the voice of God. Yes; the time would come—must come, when he should lead his people out of Egypt, and away from its idolatry, back to the land whence they came, and back to Bethel, the altar of the one true God.

Prince Mousa now felt himself to be an alien in the midst of an unfriendly people, who hated his race and his religion. He was without friendship, or even companionship, for he had lost his hold upon the pharaoh and the Egyptians, and had not, and in the nature of things could not, for the present at least, form personal connections with the

Hebrews, who still regarded him as their chief enemy. Thrown thus back upon himself, he turned again to the study of the great Hebrew fathers. What men they were! Imperfect to be sure! But men, every inch of them. Real men with real flesh and blood, with the weakness of real men to be sure, and yet they were so strong, so vivid, so distinct, as to live and breathe in these writings before him. He had now found his real friends and companions, his counsellors and guides, and with them he would henceforth abide.

CHAPTER VI

THE GRAND MONARCH

At the age of thirty-five Rameses II. had more than realized his youthful dream of power and splendor and glory,—a power and splendor and glory never before equalled by any pharaoh—nor any mortal man. His dominion was world-wide—for the whole world feared him and paid him tribute. This tribute was in great part voluntary, but was nevertheless a witness to his supreme authority. It was in fact all the surer witness of the great humiliation to which all the nations of the world had been reduced by him—the Hittites alone excepted. And even they were obliged to allow an Egyptian fortress and garrison to be established almost within sight of their proud capital on the Orontes. The highway from Egypt to Syria and all Asia lay through Canaan, or the land of the Philistines, and this was now an Egyptian province strongly garrisoned. In fact there was a line of Egyptian fortresses extending from the city of Tanis—or as it was now called, Rameses-Tanis—on

the most northern boundary of the delta to the banks of the Euphrates; and the rich cities of Babylon and Nineveh were thus subjected to a constant menace of invasion by the invincible armies of Egypt.

Nothing therefore could be too high a price to pay for the pharaoh's friendship, and not a month, scarcely a week, passed by without seeing a caravan from Babylon or Nineveh or some part of Asia carrying down to Egypt gifts to the proud pharaoh. The gifts included something of everything these people possessed: horses and chariots, camels and dromedaries; silver and gold and all manner of precious stones, costly jewels for the queen, and the most beautiful maidens for the royal harem. So anxious indeed was the king of Persia to make his tribute complete, and his friendship with the great pharaoh secure, that he did not spare his own daughters,—and royal princesses were therefore counted among the women of Rameses' harems at On and Rameses-Tanis. From the sources of the Blue Nile in the southland came gifts of all sorts of beasts and birds: baboons, apes, giraffes, monkeys, leopards, panthers, and strange birds with the most gorgeous plumage. The pharaoh's fleet covered the Mediterranean and brought from the coast of Africa flowering shrubs and

plants, luscious fruit and incense trees. In a word, the richest and rarest products of the whole world became the most common things in Egypt.

But Rameses was not a mere voluptuary. He was, as we know, a man of great intellect, a scholar, and a philosopher. He was also a man of action, and loved the excitement and the hardships of the march, or the chase, more than the soft influences of the harem. There was little of the oriental, and much of the modern Greek in the character of Rameses. In truth it may be said that it was from Rameses II. that the Greeks derived their art if not their letters. The pharaoh did not therefore give himself up to ease and sensual enjoyments. His passion for his Hittite queen was strong, and it kept him from falling into the weakening excesses of the harem. It helped him to appreciate the beautiful in form and color; it quickened his artistic sense in every way, and inspired him with the high ambition to be known in history as the Father of Art and Letters. Yes, the new life which the Hittite woman awakened in Rameses did all that—which is saying everything that can be said in praise of the passion of human, of earthly love. It is a beautiful passion and seeks its complete fulfilment in making all things in this world beautiful. But it is a passion which seeks

only its own gratification. Harmonious color, melodious sound, graceful, stately and imposing forms act and react upon this sentiment until beauty becomes the only law of God, and love the only law of life. So Rameses felt and believed; so the Greeks felt and believed; and the world is indebted to this feeling and this belief for its highest art, and its finest literature—for the Parthenon and the Iliad.

Is this not its sufficient justification? We shall see. That Rameses had now lost completely his youthful moral and spiritual ideals is plain enough; and there is no mistaking the fact that his present ambition seems a more manly, a more kingly, and a more rational one. It attracts our sympathy and we admire him as people always admire a grand monarch—and Rameses II. was the first type of a truly grand monarch the world had ever seen. But philosophy without spiritual vision always produces unbelief, and spiritual vision only comes to the pure in heart. Rameses was now an unbeliever.

He regarded the learned metaphysical system of theology taught by the famous college of priests at On as pure priestcraft; and he looked upon the elaborate temple ritual, with its minute and intricate rubrics, as so many chains to bind the people

to the temple and the priest. From this bondage no one could escape—not even the pharaoh. But was not the pharaoh the "Pontifex Maximus"? Did not all authority, spiritual as well as temporal, reside in him? The Curia, or council of high priests, were they not his advisers merely, and responsible to him for the proper conduct of the services in all the temples throughout all the land? Yes, this was all nominally true; but in reality the "Curia," or great council of priests, were the rulers of the nation—the pharaoh included. Of course this priestly council—this college of cardinals, as it were—disguised the priestly hand of authority and made it appear to be the hand of the pharaoh. Rameses determined that the hand of authority should be the pharaoh's hand in reality as well as in the outward seeming. But this was no easy matter to accomplish. First of all it was necessary that he should acquire a perfect mastery of the elaborate and minutely intricate temple ritual. There was a formulary for all religious ceremonies which had been composed by the god *Ra* for the direction of his worshippers; and only by complying with this formulary in every particular could acceptable worship be offered. Moreover the god had bound himself by these formularies for all time to come, and was compelled to grant any petition

the worshipper might make if made according to the strict letter of the ritual.

But these formularies, these ritualistic laws were not and could not be entrusted to the unlearned. The high priest was of course the only proper custodian of so sacred, so all-powerful a talisman. The prince of the nome or the pharaoh were the nominal high priests, but the real high priest was he who led the temple worship. When, therefore, the prince of a nome or the pharaoh conducted the worship it was under the personal direction of the head priest of the temple, who stood at the side of the celebrant and directed the ceremony in all of its particulars. If the innumerable conditions of the ritual were all met, the god could not escape the obligation of fulfilling his part and granting the petition; but should the least of them be omitted, the god was pledged to nothing in exchange. And that there should be no escape of the worshipper from the power of the priesthood, the priest alone was the judge as to whether all the conditions of the mysteries of the ritual were complied with.

The prince, the pharaoh, or any Egyptian could of course employ the priest to offer worship for him, in his absence as well as in his presence; and even after his death, and no sum

was too great to give in exchange for priestly prayer for the repose of the soul after death. It was by such means that the priesthood acquired its vast wealth, as well as its vast power. So firmly rooted became the Egyptian priesthood as to defy any pharaoh, however powerful he might be. But the priesthood could not refuse the pharaoh his right to become the actual high priest, and to officiate in the temple, unaided if he should so elect.

Moreover, the "Curia," or council of high priests, were obliged to submit to the pharaoh the papyrus containing the ritual written by the god himself for the direction of his worshippers. If the pharaoh chose, therefore, he might conduct his own worship. But the conditions were so exacting and laborious, and the care and responsibility so constant and tiresome, as to well-nigh make this impossible; and few if any of the predecessors of Rameses II. had the strength, the patience, or the inclination to undertake such a task. Nor could they see that anything was to be gained by it. The pharaoh was the head of the priesthood, and it was to the interest of this class to support his dignity and authority. And this they always did so long as their privileges were not interfered with. They always stood for the king as opposed to the people.

Since, therefore, it was almost impossible to expect ritualistic perfection from a prince constantly troubled with the affairs of state, it was but natural that he should employ the services of professional ritualists who devoted all their lives to the service of the temple. A slip of memory; the slight accidental impurity; an imperfect genuflection; or a genuflection given at the wrong moment, or in the wrong place, vitiated the whole service. Such being the ceremonial laws, the unwillingness of the pharaoh to take their responsibilities upon him is hardly a matter of wonder. Great, therefore, was the surprise of the priesthood and the joy of the people when Rameses appeared in the temple without an attendant priest, to offer sacrifice to *Ra*, whose incarnation he himself was.

Nothing else could have testified so powerfully to the fervent zeal of his orthodox faith. This was a masterful stroke of statesmanship and wiped out completely from the national mind any thought of a taint of heresy that might belong to his dynasty. The pharaoh himself was now the custodian of the sacred ritual given by *Ra*, and was henceforth the infallible authority on all questions of faith or ceremony. In the pharaoh as the Pontifex Maximus was now united the complete supremacy—temporal and spiritual—of Egypt. The knowing high priests

saw of course that they were outwitted by the pharaoh. They understood perfectly well that it was Rameses' love of absolute authority, and not his love of religion, that induced him to assume the heavy duties of the active high priest of Egypt. They were now powerless so long as the pharaoh maintained the orthodox faith of the nation. But they remembered the taint of heresy in his blood, and watched him with the keen eyes of jealous professional experts, ready to sound the alarm should the slightest evidence of his heterodoxy appear.

But Rameses knew his rôle too well to be caught in any such way. He of course cared nothing for any faith so far as he himself was concerned; but knowing that the people required some religion, he was disposed to make the established church as strong as possible, now that it was absolutely in his own hands. So that his anxious critics were unable to discover the slightest departure from the established doctrines and ritualistic laws of the national cult; and the nation as a whole believed him to be the most deeply religious sovereign that ever sat upon the throne of the pharaohs,—but the priesthood knew him to be an out-and-out heretic. But for the matter of that so were they—and the pharaoh knew this, and they knew that he knew it. There was therefore a silent compact of unbelief

between the pharaoh and the council of high priests, the "Curia." Their mutual infidelity was of course never so much as hinted at in any way. On the contrary, the pharaoh and his priestly advisers vied with each other in their professed zeal for the doctrines and liturgy of the orthodox church.

Rameses had now all actual as well as all nominal authority and power within his own grasp. But never did a pharaoh seem to hold the reins of government with a lighter, a gentler hand. It had never been his nature to be arbitrary, arrogant or tyrannical; and it was now his policy, his ambition, his earnest desire to be the true father of his people; and that he might be their father he knew that he must first become their god. Rameses knew this and encouraged therefore the worship of himself as the incarnation of *Ra*. And he did this not with any vain wish for the glory it might bring him, but from an honest belief that it was better for a nation to worship its sovereign, who had some real power to help them, than to worship the mere creation of the priestly brain or fancy. The pharaoh became therefore the universal subject of the sculptor, the architect, the poet, the painter, the musician. In him was symbolized and reflected the whole national life and character.

He was the personification of the entire Egyptian nation and represented in his person all their hopes and beliefs, in this present world and the world to come.

It was this representative character of the pharaoh that Rameses seized upon and developed in every possible way; and he honestly believed that in doing this he was working for the general good and advancement of the whole nation. And so he was. It was better—far better! that the people should worship the pharaoh as their "Holy Father" than to pay their devotions to a bull, a calf, a crocodile, or some other dumb beast of the field or the river. That the worship of the pharaoh did not wholly supplant these lower forms of idolatry is true, but we have every reason to believe that it checked and modified such degrading practices. The great number of monuments all over Egypt commemorating the life and deeds of Rameses II. have been universally attributed by historians and Egyptologists to the inordinate vanity of this pharaoh. Why not to his patriotism? This would be a more generous, a more rational interpretation of the character of this supremely great emperor—an interpretation in perfect harmony with all we know of him as the promoter of art and letters, and a purer form of worship.

It was necessary that the people should have something to symbolize and personify their highest conceptions of authority and divinity. It was also necessary that this should be a universal symbol; that is, one which the whole nation could accept. What could better answer this purpose than the pharaoh? Not the individual person, be it remembered, but the sublime office he for the time filled. What could better promote a spirit of genuine patriotism than the universal presence of the pharaoh all over the land in painting, in sculpture, in architecture?

We may then fairly and naturally attribute the innumerable Ramesian monuments in some measure at least to a true spirit of patriotism on the part of the pharaoh. Moreover, are they not in themselves the best of all evidences of the universal regard in which the pharaoh was held? It is not possible that Rameses planned, directed, or even suggested or conceived a tenth part of the memorials of his reign and dynasty; and they must have been therefore the voluntary offerings of the princes and people of the different nomes throughout Egypt. That all these monuments were finished, or even begun during the reign of Rameses II. is inconceivable. Rameses is then indisputably the grand monarch of Egyptian history, and with this fact clearly fixed in our minds we proceed with our story.

Prince Mousa was still the prime minister of Egypt in spite of the rupture between himself and the pharaoh, for his urgent request that he might be allowed to leave the court and take up his residence amongst his own people as their governor was not granted. In fact, Rameses would not listen to such a request, and gave Mousa clearly to understand that he was to remain in his service and at the head of the administration. He told him frankly that he had discarded all thought of religion, except as a means of government, but that he should maintain the orthodox faith in its integrity, and should require his prime minister to do the same—at least in the outward seeming. And he gave Mousa to understand that this matter of worship and of religious ceremonial could not and should not be disregarded or trifled with in the slightest degree, for upon the strict observance of the doctrine and ritual of the national belief rested the pillars of his throne. Mousa knew this as well as the pharaoh. The pharaoh utterly refused to discuss or even listen to Prince Mousa's pleadings for his race and his religion.

"There is but one race and one religion in Egypt," said the pharaoh to his prime minister, "and I warn you to keep this always in mind. To act or even to think otherwise as the prime minis-

ter of Egypt is treason. But I know you well and know that you are incapable of treason. I hope you will in time be cured of your childish faith in a religion whose authors were wild Arabs. But until that time shall come let no word or act betray your want of faith in the established church of this empire. I need your services and can trust your loyalty in the many great enterprises I am undertaking for the enlightenment and general betterment of my people. I shall ask your advice on many matters of importance, but never on the question of religion—nor on the subject of the Hebrews. All my subjects shall be treated with equal justice and required to render equal loyalty. I know no divisions of religious cult or race. I care not what you may think of my personal character, or of my failure to keep a youthful and foolish compact—a compact creditable to the intelligence of neither one of us. In a word, I care not what you may think of my changed attitude toward you —and your religion. I only care to have you know that I am the pharaoh and require your services. That I value and fully appreciate what you have already done both in war and peace is proven by the office you hold—the highest office within my gift. We have done with the youthful sentiment of friendship,—our relations for the future shall be

based upon the more rational sentiment of mutual self-interest."

Mousa listened in silence to the words of the pharaoh, but he could not disguise his feelings of sorrow, nor a feeling of admiration for the strong will, the boundless energy, and good purpose of the pharaoh. Prince Rameses did not fail to remark this look of admiration on the face of Mousa, and dismissed the prime minister with the feeling that he could not only trust his loyalty, but might even hope for his sympathy.

CHAPTER VII

THE KING'S FAMILY

Mousa was forced to admire the pharaoh's statecraft, and he was astonished at his ability, at the clearness and power of his reasoning in regard to the priesthood and the orthodox religion. His policy toward the Hebrews seemed also as just as it was wise. Viewed from the standpoint of statesmanship, Rameses' position seemed to be the right one upon all these questions, and to oppose him would indeed be nothing less than treason. Mousa realized this and the more he thought about it the more intolerable, the more impossible became his position as prime minister of Egypt. If he could only throw off his feelings of race and religion, he could enter heartily into the truly great plans of the pharaoh for the enlightenment and general well-being of the whole nation.

That Rameses had the good of the whole nation at heart Mousa could not doubt, and why should he permit the sentiments of race and religion to hinder him from aiding in this great work? What possible

good could he accomplish if he refused to work with the pharaoh for the accomplishment of his truly beneficent purpose? If he refused he should have to throw up his post and cast in his lot with his own race. But the Hebrews did not want him, for they did not trust him. And, moreover, they were happy and content for the most part to live as they were living, the subjects of a pharaoh who had lightened their toil, and bettered their condition in so many ways. To leave the service of the pharaoh would therefore be self-extinction without any compensation whatever. It would be sacrificing himself without in any way helping his race. He might therefore waive the question of race and remain at his post. But could he waive also the question of religion? And why not? To raise that question now would be an act of treason.

Moreover, the Hebrews themselves seemed little disposed to urge that matter at present. It had been a very long time since he had received any appeals from them in regard to their faith. Even his own brother had ceased to visit him and to urge the claims of his race and religion. Why should he suffer this sentiment to destroy his peace of mind and his usefulness in the world? But had he not a mission, a divine mission, entrusted to him? And was he not willing to sacrifice all

things else for its fulfilment? Yes, but how could he know that such a mission had been laid upon him? How could he know that the Hebrew faith was the only true faith? What evidence had he that the unknown and illiterate Hebrew scribes upon whom he rested his faith spoke the truth? What evidence had he that the Hebrew religion was any truer or better than the worship of the Egyptians? None whatever,—except his visions, and they may have been mere fancy.

If the God of Israel was the only true God, why did He suffer them to remain in bondage, subject to the corrupting influences of idolatry? And why should he suppose that this strange God of this strange race should elect him of all others to reëstablish His true worship, and lead His people out of the land of bondage and idolatry back to their native land; —out of civilization, in fact, back to barbarism. For was not that the true meaning of the fulfilment of his mission? But considering all the claims of his race and his religion and accepting in its fullest and widest sense the mission to which he had been called, how could he best accomplish this work for his God, this deliverance of his people? Not certainly by surrendering his position and power in the government of Egypt; for this would be to strip himself of all power and authority

among the Egyptians without gaining any power and influence among the Hebrews.

Thus did the son of Amram reason, and as he reasoned thus the attitude of the pharaoh toward all religion seemed the only rational one. The pharaoh reasoned that religion was a universal form of superstition, which could not be destroyed and should not be combatted; but if wisely used it was always a tower of strength to the government and the general stability of society. The pharaoh was then after all both wiser and better than he, for his was a narrow, racial view, whilst the pharaoh's plans of enlightenment and culture were universal in their principles and scope. Mousa was therefore disposed to remain where he was and to let things take their course; not only that, but he felt it to be his patriotic duty to help the pharaoh in every possible way to advance his enlightened policy of national government.

At his next interview with his prime minister Rameses was quick to detect the more cheerful look upon his face and to feel his active spirit of coöperation; and the pharaoh began to have hopes that he might secure once more the cordial sympathy, as well as the loyal support, of his quondam friend and brother in his great policy of national education.

All things now went forward with great strides, and the marks of a rapidly advancing civilization were everywhere to be seen. The active spirit of the pharaoh was felt in everything. Schools for architecture, sculpture, painting, and all the fine arts were established in every part of the country and drew their support from the royal exchequer. But the imperial patronage was no less felt in the support of letters and the sciences. Agriculture, irrigation, navigation were studied as sciences. So also were the construction of dykes, levees, and the building of roads and highways. These multifarious enterprises and improvements required a very great outlay for their support—greater than the royal revenue could afford, and the pharaoh determined to lay the church under contribution. The priesthood controlled at least one-third of the entire property of the nation, but they had always been exempt from taxation. Rameses knew that this was a very great innovation and might be a dangerous one, and would have to be carried out therefore with great caution and skill, but he felt himself equal to the delicate task. He began first of all to beautify the old temples and tombs and statues of the gods and to erect numerous monuments. These were clearly the works of piety and religion. There could not therefore be

any objection to the use of the temple funds for such purposes.

These tombs, temples, statues, and other religious monuments were of course erected in all parts of the land, and good roads and highways were necessary to transport the material for their construction from the sometimes far distant quarries and mines. The temple money could therefore be properly used for building roads and highways. Sculpture, architecture, and painting—what were they but so many servants of the gods? Hence the art schools were most proper objects of the temple patronage. And what was the study of letters, of literature, of poetry, history, and so forth, but a means of honoring and worshipping the gods? The celestial science of astronomy had already been carried to a very high degree by the priesthood as becoming their sacred profession. So that it was not difficult for Rameses as actual high priest of Egypt, as the Pontifex Maximus, or the pope, to show that as the temporal and the spiritual were one, there was no impropriety in the pharaoh in his office both as god and emperor using any or all of the revenues of Church or State, for any purpose whatever.

It thus came about that the pharaoh claimed the absolute control of both the royal and priestly revenues. Rameses thus virtually had the entire income of

the nation in his hands. The priesthood saw that it was being despoiled of its wealth by a mere theological fiction—but the fiction was of its own creation. It was in fact by this fiction that the priesthood had acquired its wealth and authority, and to destroy it would be to cut the foundations from under it. The pharaoh knew all this very well, and he knew that his position was a perfectly unassailable one. But he knew also that his course was not, and in the nature of things could not be, agreeable to the priestly order. The priesthood understood well enough that whilst Rameses was ostensibly, *i. e.*, ceremoniously, the most orthodox of all the pharaohs, he was in reality the most irreligious; that whilst he was seemingly establishing a theocracy, he was actually disestablishing the church; that whilst he was professing the higher sacerdotalism, he was practically secularizing the whole nation,—the church included. But they were powerless to do anything to check him, for to reveal the true situation would be to expose the very secrets upon which their priestcraft rested.

Rameses knew that it was necessary for him to capture and fill the imagination of the nation with the character and deeds of himself and his dynasty if he hoped to maintain his influence and power in the face of this silent hostility of the priesthood. He

therefore had his statue erected in almost every nome in Egypt, sometimes as the pharaoh, but more often as the god *Ra*. The most imposing of these statues was set up in the land of Goshen. It was the most gigantic ever known. It stood one hundred feet high, and was of one solid block of hard red granite, quarried at Assuan, and transported by what means we know not hundreds of miles by river and roadway to the land of Goshen. The weight of this statue was not less than fifteen thousand tons. What better evidence could we possibly have than this statue alone furnishes of the science of navigation and engineering as perfected by the ancient Egyptians? And what could more effectually fill the imagination of his subjects with wonder and reverent awe than to behold this gigantic image of their pharaoh sitting between the comparatively diminutive statues of the gods Ra and Tum, he being the incarnation of both?

But Rameses appealed in other and more artistic ways to the cultivated imagination of the people. His table of the kings in the temple of his father, Seti I., at Abydos, is still to be seen, and carries his ancestry back to Menes, who was the first god to clothe himself in the form of an earthly pharaoh. Rameses built temples at Heliopolis and Rameses-Tanis, to contain his own image and to promote his

worship. He had royal historiographers who recited at the court, and in the chief temples throughout the land, the deeds of himself and his dynasty. Pentaueret, this court poet, or laureate, composed songs and dramas in his honor. We thus see that the architect, the sculptor, the painter, the poet, and the engineer, all wrought for the honor and glory of the pharaoh.

Rameses displayed an equal regard for all parts of his empire, and devoted his energies to beautifying the whole land. Go where one might in Egypt and Nubia, he could find abundant evidence of the architectural and artistic activity of the pharaoh. In every nome of the empire the pharaoh either constructed anew or restored old cities, temples, tombs and statues. The great Hall of Columns at Karnak, near Thebes, the Ramesseum with its colossus in the delta, and the Temple of Abu-Simbel, in far-off Nubia, still attest the thoughtful impartiality of the grand monarch. Rameses' choice of the delta as his place of residence excited no comment, for the reason that most of the pharaohs had shown the same preference. He had two great palaces, one at *On* or Heliopolis, and the other at Rameses-Tanis—(known in the Old Testament as Zoan). These royal palaces were, of course, constructed and ornamented with a grandeur and a splendor in har

mony with the transcendent character and magnificent ideas of the pharaoh.

Nothing was too good, too costly, too artistic for the dwelling-place of the incarnate *Ra;* and for the pharaoh to have shown indifference to the character of his palaces would have been to depreciate and belittle himself in the eyes of his subjects. The dual nature of the pharaoh explained and excused any extravagance of praise or worship bestowed upon him, any degree of magnificence pertaining to himself or his surroundings,—for he was the symbol and personification of all human and divine perfection.

Heliopolis was a small town not far from the mouth of the Nile, at the apex of the delta, and owed its importance to its being the seat of the most famous university in the ancient world. Its school of theology was renowned above all others in Egypt for its learned cosmogony, its discoveries in astronomy, and its many mysteries. Moreover, Heliopolis had always kept itself free from political entanglements, agitations, and revolutions, and its university, and especially its school of theology, thus acquired and maintained an influence throughout Egypt greater than all other colleges of divinity combined. In fact, so popular did the doctrines of the Ennead become, as to force all the other sacer-

dotal colleges, save one, throughout Egypt to adopt it—with such modifications of course as were required by the "use" or cult of the local cathedral or temple.

This universal acceptance of the Heliopolitan cosmogony showed that the theologians of this school knew and respected the spirit of Egyptian tradition. The one exception to the universal acceptance of this doctrine of the creative council of nine gods was a very notable one, viz., Hermopolis. This school of theology denied the doctrine of the Ennead, and taught that the world was created by five gods instead of nine. But whilst the doctrine of "five" stamped itself with indelible marks upon the local city and temple and nome, it did not prevail to any appreciable extent beyond these limits, and was thus the dogma of a small sect of dissenters or nonconformists—whilst the doctrine of the "nine" was the doctrine of the "catholic," *i. e.*, universal, church of Egypt. Rameses knew that the school of Heliopolis represented the catholic faith of the church, that its doctrines of creation and immortality were in accord with the general spirit of Egyptian tradition, and that its learned mysteries, founded upon its exclusive knowledge of astronomy, gave it a unique authority and power throughout the land. He, himself, had been brought

up in this school, knew its doctrines, and performed its elaborate and mystical ceremonies with the greatest care. What more natural, therefore, than that he should erect a palace within its precincts?

The royal residences of Rameses were, in reality, cities, for they always included a temple, and wherever there was a temple there was always a city, and where there was no temple there could be no city, however large the town might be. The palace of Rameses at Heliopolis was the most extensive, as well as the most magnificent, ever known at that time. It included both the temple and the university—for the pharaoh gave the priests and professors to understand he was their father and their god, and they were his children,—members of his household and under his special care and guidance. The pharaoh did not mean by this to dominate or in any manner coerce the thought and speculations of the faculty of the university; on the contrary, he meant that these scholars should feel all the freer under his patronage to pursue their studies without let or hindrance. He cared little what direction their speculations took so long as he kept in touch with them, and so long as they maintained an outward conformity at least to the established church and orthodox faith.

That the learned doctrines of this school of theology

were not always in real conformity with the popular faith, we know. To take a single example, but a very remarkable one. The god *Ra* was the popular god of this nome whilst Atumu was the theological god. But the fact that the pharaoh (Ra-meses) took the name and became the incarnation of "Ra," rather than "Atumu," proves that the popular faith was too strong for the learned dogmas; it proves that even in far-off Egypt, and notwithstanding the degraded condition of the great mass, when the priests once raised a ghost of religion, they were powerless to lay it. That is to say, when the priests once succeed in binding a belief, however erroneous, upon the popular imagination, the people will hold them to it in its grossest forms, or else they will throw it wholly away, and with it all thoughts of religion. The priest is always and everywhere the author of infidelity.

The royal palace at Heliopolis was the source and inspiration of all the varied activities of Egypt. Here the pharaoh surrounded himself with not only the great savants, and council of high priests, with his ministers and chief officers of state, but also with an army of architects, sculptors, painters, engineers, and artisans of all kinds. The palace at Heliopolis was a huge workshop, and the pharaoh was the master workman, inciting, directing, in-

spiring, giving life and shape to his plans of national advancement and universal empire. While Rameses was in residence at this palace there was little or no rest for any one connected with the court or employed in any capacity by the administration of state; but when he removed to Rameses-Tanis there was a respite for all, and the stern duties of Church and State gave place to the relaxing pursuits of pleasure.

The royal palace at Rameses-Tanis was therefore constructed more for pleasure and show than for the serious administration of state affairs. The palace here as at Heliopolis constituted within itself a city which was surrounded by a massive wall of Nile brick ornamented and fortified with turrets and towers. It blazed with the royal colors and was guarded by a select body of troops in glittering armor. The city was entered by four principal gates and at each gate were planted tall masts made of the cedars of Lebanon from whose tops there floated out, high over all, the red and the blue banner of the Rameses dynasty. These banners were only seen when the pharaoh was in residence. The eastern gate was never entered save by the emperor and his attendants. The pharaoh's private apartments were in the centre of this vast enclosure and rose above the other buildings

so as to command an extensive view of the river and the sea.

On the right of this central pavilion and entirely concealed by a plantation of trees stood the dwellings of the royal ladies, in the midst of flower gardens, completely encircling a lake sacred to themselves. The royal ladies of Egypt dwelt thus apart, forming a community of their own into which no man ever thought of intruding —not even the pharaoh himself without giving due notice and receiving their consent. Yet they did not live the life of nuns and recluses; for at almost any hour of the day might be seen passing through the quadrangle in front of the royal pavilion the litter of some princess accompanied by a troop of maidens and preceded by a lord in waiting. Thus they came and went to bathe in the Nile, to bargain at the bazaars, to walk or lounge in the park, or to attend the play, the dance-house or some other place of amusement. The bathing in the Nile was a purely ceremonious and religious duty—the lake being provided for all other ablutions. In the rear of the centre pavilion and separated from it by a wide canal, were the king's storehouses, treasury, workshops and studios, constituting a town within themselves and of no slight proportions, for there were hundreds of these build-

ings. The dwellings of the ministers of state and the chief officers of the army, as well as the heads of all the departments of administration of state, were to the left and formed another community, distinct in itself, yet reflecting in no slight degree the royal splendor. The prelates were of course lodged within the precincts of the temple.

We see then that the palace was not one huge structure, but was made up of a great number of beautiful and picturesque buildings standing amidst extensive gardens which contained almost every flower, shrub, plant or tree known to the world. On either side of the principal edifice there were rows of pavilions connected with each other by colonnades or by bridges, under which flowed canals that watered the gardens, and kept the water of the lake fresh and pure. So numerous were these canals as to give the palace the appearance of a city upon an evergreen island.

But we have thus far seen only the exterior splendor of Rameses-Tanis. Let us now take a glimpse of the interior, and we can do this by following the litter of the royal princess who has just crossed the quadrangle with her train and is proceeding toward the women's quarters. We enter with her and find ourselves in a chamber of gold carpeted with sky-blue rugs of Persian silk, and

silver brocade from Damascus. The coverings of the seats and couches are richly embroidered with feathers and look like the breasts of birds. On the table we find unguent boxes, and all manner of ebony and ivory articles finely carved in the most artistic manner. An image of a favorite goddess and a number of other little figures or statues made of emerald, lapis-lazuli, malachite, agate, bronze and gold constitute the chief ornaments. Drawing aside the light curtains we find ourselves in a long balcony with a finely-worked balustrade looking out on the river. Passing to the end of the balcony we enter one of a series of high and airy rooms furnished more with a view to usefulness or necessity than luxury. The lower part of the wall is lined with white and violet tiles, on each of which is painted a star. Above these tiles and over the divans skirting them is a dark green covering of a texture between a Persian rug and a damask curtain. Chairs of ebony, ivory and cane stand around a long table in the midst of the room. The corners of the room are filled with flowering plants, and the furnishing is completed by tall obelisks of ebony having golden censers containing incense, which is used both to perfume and to disinfect the chambers.

In the midst of all this luxury of nature and art,

Rameses had a temple erected containing his statue, and dedicated to the worship of himself. The pharaoh built this cathedral and dedicated it to his own worship from no vain desire for self-glorification, but from a policy of pure statesmanship. This royal city was on the extreme boundary line of the delta, facing the sea on the north, and the highway to Syria and Asia on the east. It was therefore the first object the foreigner saw on approaching the land of the pharaohs, and Rameses knew the importance of a first impression, and nothing could have impressed the oriental mind more than the palace and temple of the pharaoh at Rameses-Tanis. It was here that Rameses generally received messengers and ambassadors from other countries, and that these receptions might be all the more impressive they were preceded by a grand service in the cathedral, where the pharaoh himself officiated, and rendered divine honors to his own statue.

It was just after the conclusion of such an impressive reception given to the Hittite king, the father of Rameses' beloved queen, that a most annoying report was brought to the king by the chief of the grand council of high priests. This report was to the effect that the Hebrews in the land of Goshen refused to worship the pharaoh or any of the other gods of Egypt. Such was the account as

given in general terms. But we shall have to make some further inquiry in order to know the actual state of things among the Israelites, and the cause of this seemingly sudden outbreak.

The long war with its necessarily mild administration of the laws of servitude had given the Hebrews not only a respite from severe toil, but also time to cultivate the sentiments of race and religion. The leaders had taken advantage of this and had gathered the people together into families and tribes, and perfected some kind of rude national organization, with its lawmaking power vested in a council of representatives from each tribe. This council had full authority on all questions pertaining to the social and religious life of the people. One of its first acts was to issue an edict prohibiting the intermarriage of Hebrews with Egyptians. Its next act was to petition the pharaoh that the Hebrews might be exempt from the worship of the Egyptian gods. This petition never reached the pharaoh. It did not get beyond the prime minister, and it came to him as a rude awakening, just as he had almost determined that his people cared little or nothing about their faith and that it was folly for him to sacrifice himself upon the altar either of race or religion.

Mousa had been misled by the quiet which prevailed during the period of Hebrew organization.

This had occupied more than a year, and had been almost wholly unobserved by the state officials, so busy were they and everybody else in carrying forward the multitudinous schemes of the enterprising pharaoh. This gathering cloud in the Hebrew horizon was not wholly unseen, however. The council of high priests, who had their emissaries everywhere, were duly informed from time to time of the approaching storm. But it suited their purpose to wait until the storm should break before taking any notice of these heathens and their heresy.

Prince Mousa was now fully alive to the gravity of the situation. He knew that the pharaoh would be glad to ignore this whole matter; but he knew also that the priests would not permit him to do so. He could not of course explain this strange condition of things to the Hebrews, for that would be a gross betrayal of confidence, and might, and probably would lead to an open rupture between the pharaoh and the priesthood. His first thought was the generous one to shield the pharaoh from this troublesome affair. He therefore sent for his brother and appealed to him not to urge this matter. He explained to him that the pharaoh was very favorably disposed toward the Hebrews, but that he was compelled to maintain the orthodox

faith and the national ceremonies of religion; and that he could not therefore permit any laxity in the outward form of worship. He reminded his brother of the great amelioration in the condition of their race which Rameses had brought about, and implored him not to throw away the real blessings by involving the people in a hopeless conflict with the government which would only, could only, end in defeat and punishment, and possibly slavery. Prince Mousa spoke with great earnestness, and for the first time impressed his brother with the belief that he was at heart a Hebrew and loved his race and his religion.

The pleadings of the prime minister prevailed for the time being and the pharaoh was not made aware of the petition, nor did he even know that there was any spirit of dissent manifesting itself among the Hebrews. The council of high priests knew perfectly well the part that the prime minister had performed in quieting this incipient rebellion; but they felt certain that the time would come when he, with all his power and skill, would no longer be able to stand between these hateful infidels and their just deserts. Such in brief were the conditions and events which led up finally to the open refusal of the Hebrews to conform to the established church of Egypt.

This was the first cloud which had as yet been seen in the clear sky of Rameses II.'s reign, the first discordant note that had been heard in the Nile valley since he came to the throne, and it sounded very loud and very harsh in the pharaoh's ears—so loud and so harsh in fact as to excite in him a feeling strongly akin to rage. Were all his plans of education, of art, of culture, and general improvement and enlightenment to be brought to naught by the narrow zeal and the superstition of an alien, barbarous race that in spite of their well-known disloyalty he had not only tolerated but favored in many notable ways? And this was their gratitude, this their appreciation of his endeavors to lighten their labors and better their condition!

As King Rameses thought on these things the fierceness of his anger knew no bounds, and but for Prince Mousa he would have given instant orders for the execution of all the leaders of the Hebrews and the absolute enslavement of the rest of the people. At any rate he would not argue with them, but would give immediate orders to his prime minister. Rameses sent at once for Prince Mousa, but was informed by his chief scribe that Prince Mousa had just set out with a swift and strong body of horsemen for Phacusa, the capital of the land of Goshen. The prime minister left a letter for the pharaoh telling him of the

expedition, and promising that the rebellion would be very thoroughly and quickly suppressed. He also assured the pharaoh that there was no need of his troubling himself in the slightest degree about the matter.

Rameses' anger abated somewhat on reading this letter, and taking his prime minister's advice the king did not permit the report of the Hebrew rebellion to interfere in the slightest degree with the order of the day, and the king of the Hittites was entertained with a splendor and a magnificence of which he never could have dreamed. After the worship of Rameses in the cathedral and the formal reception of the king, the pharaoh and his court gave themselves up to a round of amusements that astonished and bewildered the great Hittite monarch. First of all came chariot races. This was a compliment to the distinguished visitor, whose nation was the most famous in the world for its chariot warriors. Then came a military tournament illustrating the different arms and modes of attack and defence. This was followed by a regatta on the sea, which ended in a mock naval battle.

The outdoor sports being ended, the brilliant company repaired to their private chambers and their baths, and after a refreshing sleep arrayed themselves in their finest linen apparel for the banquet.

The banqueting hall was the largest room in the palace. It was circular in form with a richly canopied dais let in to the eastern rim of the circle, upon which stood the throne guarded by two lions and supported on the backs of four Asiatic captives who crouched beneath their burden with expressions of intense agony. The ceilings of this hall were vaulted and painted to represent the deep blue and starry sky of an Egyptian night. The pillars supporting this celestial ceiling were carved to represent all the most beautiful trees, the date palm and the cedars of Lebanon being the most conspicuous. Festoons reached from pillar to pillar around the hall. Tables to accommodate four hundred persons occupied the outer zone of the circle, in the centre of which was a large opening leading to an underground passage connecting with the kitchen. The hall was brilliantly lighted by a thousand lamps shaped like lilies and tulips suspended from the circular edge of the ceiling. As the hour for the banquet approaches an army of servants come and go through the underground passage, bringing the plate of gold, and all other things necessary for the service of the feast. Beautifully ornamented braziers on wheels are provided to keep the viands hot.

All things now seem ready, the servants have de-

parted and the chief steward is making his last inspection when the low soft sound of chanting is heard and a long procession of priests, clad in pure white, file into the hall and surround the throne. They are followed by another body of priests, with leopard skins thrown over their shoulders as tokens of their superior rank. Then come the courtiers, the heads of departments, the ministers of state, and last of all the pharaoh and his royal guest, the Hittite king. As the pharaoh enters the whole company prostrate themselves, and flowers drop before him in showers from hidden hands and strew his pathway to the throne, which he ascends with solemn air, and turning around bids all arise. The high priest of the temple of Rameses then addresses a petition to the pharaoh as the holy father, asking that his blessing may rest upon them all. This petition being graciously granted the company is seated in the order of their ranks and the banquet begins.

First of all there issue from the underground passage in the centre of the hall hundreds of Nubian girls from twelve to fourteen years old, perfectly nude and with their heads closely shaven. This nudity of these maids is not for the mere gratification of lustful eyes, but to ensure personal as well as ceremonial cleanliness; for to the Egyptians cleanliness came before and was a necessary condi-

tion to godliness. There was a serving maid for each guest, and a steward to every ten maids, so that the servants outnumbered the guests. The chief butler served no one save the pharaoh, and the pharaoh served his distinguished guest with his own royal hands and from his own plate. The banquet was served in courses and included all the delicacies that could be procured from every land and clime. The Egyptians were however neither gluttons nor winebibbers, and ate and drank with great moderation, so that at the end of three hours of feasting there was hardly a man the worse for his eating or drinking, except perhaps the Hittite king. The banquet being over, all signs of it quickly disappeared, and the army of servants was followed by an almost equal number of musicians, actors, dancers, who all joined in a hymn of praise to the pharaoh, "The Light of the Sun," who giveth life and joy to all his children. The historiographer then recited the mighty deeds of the Rameses dynasty, and was followed by Pentaueret, the court poet, who sang two odes, one to Rameses in war, and one to Rameses in peace.

RAMESES THE GREAT IN WAR.

The men of the East
Great kings and proud lords
With bright chariots of gold
Strove mightily against this land,

This land of Situ and Nuit,
This land of Osiris and Isis,
This land of Hathor and Horus,
This land of Tumu and Ra,
This land of Menes and Rameses,
This land of the life-giving Nile.
They strove hard but in vain,
For the "Great House," the god Ra,
Lifted high his head, in battle
He fought alone in their midst
And the kings of the earth fell down.

RAMESES IN PEACE.

Behold the fair land of the sun,
This land of the Sphinx and the Nile,
From the north and the south, the east and the west,
Comes no cry nor lament from the sorrowing,
But the glad note of joy rings loud and rings clear
From the source of the Nile to the shores of the sea,
For the people are fed, and give worship to Ra.
To Rameses—Ra, whom we praise and adore,
For the temples and tombs new-built or restored,
Prove to men and to gods the true faith of our king.
Then laud we and praise in full chorus of song,
The glories of war, and the blessings of peace.

After the poet Pentaueret had recited these two odes, the remainder of the evening, or night, was given up to lighter amusements, in which singing, dancing, and the performances of trained lions and other animals made the greater part; and the deep darkness of the Egyptian night had faded away into bright day before sleep reigned in the palace of the king.

CHAPTER VIII

THE COUNCIL OF ISRAEL

WHEN Joseph's brethren came to dwell in Egypt they were given a wild tract of uncultivated land lying on the northeastern side of the Pelusic branch of the Nile, and stretching eastward to the undulations of the Arabian hills. This district is called in the Old Testament "Goshen" and "The Field of Zoan," that is to say the country lying about the city of "Zoan." It was known in Egypt as the "Arabian Nome" and "Egyptian Arabia" whose capital was Gesem, from which we derive the word "Goshen." At first thought it may seem strange that this wild and uncultivated district should be found so near the three royal cities of "Heliopolis," "Bubastis," and "Tanis," the centres of the intellectual, religious, and artistic life of the delta and all Egypt. However, this is, but in perfect character with what we know of Egypt, which was everywhere, and at all periods of its history, a land of the most striking contrasts. The fact that so large a district should remain for so

long a time in the very heart of the delta, the richest part of Egypt, unreclaimed is to be explained upon two grounds: first, the reluctance of the native Egyptians to live anywhere save in the valley of "The River," as the Nile was called; and second, on account of the exposed position of Goshen; for the delta was subject to constant raids from the nomadic tribes of Arabia and all the peoples of the East, and to insurrections from its mixed population. Thus it resulted that the delta in time became inhabited almost wholly by alien races, who were a constant menace to the Egyptian nation.

The Hebrews were originally a pastoral, rather than an agricultural people, but now that they were confined to a limited territory they were forced to till the soil and earn their bread by the sweat of their brows. Nothing is so civilizing as well-ordered and productive labor. Labor, then, was just what this easy-going, liberty-loving nomadic race needed to make it strong, and to weld it together into a civilized nation. Again, the degree of civilization is more or less indicated by the number of divisions into which the labor of a people is divided. Shepherds cannot make a nation; no more can farmers, or mechanics, or merchants or artists. The state is a complex community with a

single aim—stability. What the Hebrews required in order to become a nation was complexity, and this could only come by fixity of residence, and division of labor. Nothing therefore could have been more fortunate than the circumstances attending the emigration of the Israelites to Egypt, and their settlement in the land of Goshen.

The first thing they looked for was pasture for their flocks and herds. This was quickly found. The cultivation of the soil was naturally the next thought that presented itself, and it was not long before they found that the soil yielded as good, or a better return for their labor than their flocks and herds. They were now an agricultural as well as a pastoral race. They had no trouble in finding markets for their produce in the great cities that bounded their land on the north, and the south, and the west. In these cities they in time learned the art of barter and trade, *i. e.*, of commerce. Remaining fixed in one place they gradually exchanged the frail tent of the wandering shepherd for the more substantial abode of established communities. And thus it happened that the once barren and wild fields of Zoan were made to yield the fruits of civilization.

During the long reign of the Hyksos dynasty, Bubastis had been the favorite residence of the kings and the educational centre of the nation.

Here the art of writing was cultivated as nowhere else, and the work of the scribe was a most lucrative one. The Hebrews studied this art with great assiduity, and writing schools—as we should call them—flourished in almost every town and village in Goshen. Many of the Hebrews were also employed in the state service as scribes and accountants and other profitable occupations, for they were greatly favored by the Hyksos dynasty, both on account of their ancestor Joseph, and the ties of kindred and race. Wealth and intelligence cannot long be separated. The Hebrews became a wealthy people and hence an intelligent people. Their schools were inferior to none in the land, and "Egyptian Arabia" became one of the fairest spots of Egypt.

But the Hyksos kings worshipped not the popular gods of Egypt, and were hated by the priests and the people; who at last arose and drove them forth out of Egypt into the wilderness from which they had come. Apopi was the last of the alien kings, and then a pharaoh arose who knew not Joseph, and regarded not his kindred. This was the beginning of trouble for the Hebrews. The restored native dynasty was naturally not very kindly disposed toward a people who had been the special favorites of the heretic usurpers of

the throne of Egypt. The fact that they were not immediately enslaved speaks well for the naturally mild and gentle character of the Egyptian kings.

That the Hebrews supported the Hyksos dynasty in this war of Egyptian rebellion, and final revolution, there is every reason to believe. To think otherwise is to charge them with the basest of ingratitude, for the Hyksos pharaohs had befriended them in many and notable ways. But whilst the Hebrews were not actually enslaved, they were made to understand that they were a suspected and a hated race. A wall was erected extending the whole length of their eastern frontier. This was strongly garrisoned. Many other fortresses were established in other parts of their land, and throughout the delta,—for the delta, as has been already seen, was almost wholly inhabited by a mixed Asiatic population, who had favored the overthrown foreign dynasty. A special tax was therefore imposed upon this part of Egypt, and if the subject had not the wherewithal to pay he was forced to labor on the government works under the supervision of the army. This resulted in a slavery of the cruellest nature, for no masters are so hard and exacting as soldiers, when they have civilians as their servants. It thus came about in time that the condition of the great majority of Hebrews

was little less than absolute slavery. And yet they multiplied with great rapidity—so great in fact as to alarm the natives, who appealed to the king to use some means to check their growth, which was fast becoming a menace to his throne. The pharaoh, Seti I., father of Rameses II., yielded to this clamor for a time, and issued an order that all the male Hebrew children should be destroyed at birth.

We do not know how long this decree lasted; but we do know it was to this cruel measure that Mousa owed his position as prince in the house of the pharaoh. When the Hebrews found they were a proscribed race, many of them endeavored to escape the proscription by quitting the land of Goshen and taking up their abode in other parts of Egypt. But this was not permitted, and to prevent it a law was passed requiring all Hebrews to live within the boundaries of "Egyptian Arabia"; and any Israelite found dwelling outside these prescribed limits had his property confiscated and his person enslaved. It did not avail that he professed the Egyptian faith; his race alone condemned him. But for this special law compelling them to dwell together as one community, it is quite possible that the Hebrew race might have been in time wholly dissipated, and finally lost amidst the Egyptian

people. They owe their salvation, then, as a race, to the persecutions of their enemies; for driven thus together and forced to bear a common burden and share a common fate, the ties of race and religion were strengthened a hundredfold, and they at last turned as one man to the God of their fathers for consolation and redemption. Their faith was now the only thing that made their hard life endurable. At first they were content to hold it in silence and render a formal homage to the gods of Egypt. But they now openly refused to honor the native gods, and boldly demanded the right to worship their own God, in their own way. This was the dark cloud that suddenly appeared in the Egyptian sky just as Rameses had reached the very zenith of his power and glory.

We have seen the annoyance it caused the pharaoh, and the alarm it caused Prince Mousa. He feared lest some open conflict between the Hebrews and the soldiers should take place before he should be able to reach the scene of the rebellion, and reason with its leaders. He sent swift messengers to the military authorities of the land of Goshen, cautioning them to use no violence, nor any force against the rebels until they received explicit orders from him—for he was still the commander-in-chief of the army. These orders were obeyed and no collision had

occurred up to the time of the prime minister's arrival at the Hebrew capital. He was received by the excited populace with shouts of derision. They called him renegade, "traitor," and "Esau"! who had sold his birthright for a mess of Egyptian pottage. This was all said in the Hebrew tongue and not understood by the Egyptian soldiers. They did understand, however, the bitter personal hostility of the Israelites to their commander, and wanted of course to resent it. But the fine discipline—of which Prince Mousa was the author—prevailed, and the Egyptian soldiers stood quietly by without taking any notice of the wild abuse hurled at their general by the excited mob.

The Hebrew council, or senate, was in session when Prince Mousa arrived, and he asked to be admitted. The senate took a vote as to whether it should allow a renegade Hebrew to appear before the council of Israel. The first vote was adverse, as these Hebrew fathers expressed their utter abhorrence of and implacable hostility to this "Esau." But upon the urgent request of Mousa's brother Aaron the vote was reversed and the prime minister of Egypt was permitted to come before the fathers of Israel. On entering Prince Mousa was told to be silent till he should hear what the elders of Israel had to say to a traitor of their race and religion.

The first to speak was the chief of the tribe of Levi. He was an old man with long white hair and erect frame. He arose, and pointing his finger at Prince Mousa said, "False! false! false! false to race and religion! False to your fathers and your God!"

He said no more, and resumed his seat. There was silence for a space; for all eyes and all thoughts were fixed upon the prime minister of Egypt, who had heard, and not resented, such words of insult and reproach. At last the president of the senate turned to Prince Mousa and asked him if he had aught to say to the terrible charge of his chief.

"Let the elders of Israel speak on," was the simple response.

Then up rose Prince Mousa's brother Aaron and with trembling voice uttered a wail of woe: "Woe be to the tribe! woe be to the house that brought forth such a traitor as thou! Thou curse of our race and our religion! A year ago at thy request I counselled these fathers to moderation and compromise. I now declare that should every other Hebrew prostrate himself before the idols of this land I alone would refuse, and would gladly render up my life as a testimony to my faith in the God of my fathers, and as an expiation for the apostasy of my brother!"

The chiefs of each tribe spoke briefly and all

agreed that no further concessions were possible, for under no conditions would they any longer bend the knee to the false gods of Egypt.

After the chiefs of the tribes had all spoken, the president solemnly arose and, addressing Prince Mousa, said, "My lord prime minister, you have heard what the elders of Israel have said. Have they not spoken true? Were you, our kinsman, true to your race and your religion, we should now be as our people were in the time of our father Joseph, who used his great power and influence with the pharaoh to bless and not to curse his race."

When the chief elder had ended and sat down, the prime minister of Egypt arose. He began by reminding the elder that the cases of Joseph and himself were in no sense parallel. Joseph was born and brought up in the midst of his own people. He had known his fathers and brothers. "I, it is true," said Prince Mousa, with great emotion, "was begotten by a Hebrew father, and born of a Hebrew mother. But my infancy, childhood, youth, and manhood have all been spent in the royal palace, away from everything that could suggest my race or my religion. I knew not that I was of the Hebrew race until I had become a prince, and a priest of Egypt."

Mousa then reminded his kinsmen that the

pharaoh of Joseph's day was not an Egyptian. He was of Asiatic blood and belonged to an alien dynasty who had overthrown the native kings. He said that the pharaoh of Joseph's day was probably of a Semitic race and thus the kinsman of the Hebrews. It was easy therefore for Joseph to favor his brethren.

"But," continued the prime minister, "the present circumstances are the very reverse of all that. The hated Hyksos dynasty has been dethroned and its adherents and friends are naturally in disgrace." And then, pausing for a moment and surveying with solemn eye the eager faces of the elders of Israel, Prince Mousa said, "*Our* fate is therefore a natural one."

These words were uttered with great calmness and deliberation, but the most intense, though suppressed feeling vibrated through every syllable, and they were hardly spoken before every father in Israel was on his feet, and gazed spellbound at the speaker.

"Yes," Prince Mousa repeated, "*our* fate is a natural one. Not even the pharaoh himself can make our portion as an alien and hated race other than it is; for any sign of favor shown us by Prince Rameses would be attributed to the influence of his Israelitish prime minister. The priests

would then raise the cry that the hated heretics, the Hebrews, were again in power. That cry would greatly excite the people, and a revolution might follow. These are the plain facts of our sad situation. We cannot hope for royal favor so long as we remain the subjects of Egypt's king. But we may, and I believe shall, be able to get the consent of the pharaoh to leave this hostile country and return to the land of our fathers, to the land of Abraham—to Bethel, the altar of our God."

These weighty words of Prince Mousa were spoken in a halting manner, but they had the ring of truth and sincerity in them, and convinced all who heard them that the prime minister of Egypt was a true son of Israel, on whom they could depend. The chiefs of the tribes of Israel knew the character and extent of Prince Mousa's self-sacrifice. He had been brought up from his birth in the royal palace as a member of the royal household, and was now the most celebrated general and prime minister Egypt had ever known—next only to the king in rank and power. And he was willing to renounce it all at the call of his race and his religion. It would mean an entire change of his life and associations, a change from the society of the king and court to that of a despised race of slaves; a change from the palace of the pharaoh to

the hut of the fellah. And as these leaders in Israel thought on these things they rejoiced and gave thanks, and exclaimed with one accord, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel."

Mousa, as we shall in the future call him, made a very simple statement to his kinsmen. He told them how he had labored for years for their emancipation; how he had read and meditated upon the writings of the Hebrew scribes furnished him by his brother, and how these writings had at last awakened a fierce desire within him to turn his back upon the abominations of Egypt and to go and live in the land of Canaan, near the altar of Bethel. How he had felt that the God of Israel had called him to a great mission—to be nothing less than the deliverer of his people from the bondage and idolatry of Egypt. And then he confessed in sorrowful words his lapse from the true faith, and his return to the fleshpots of Egypt. He told them how the successful wars, and the unexampled prosperity of Egypt which followed, filled for a time his imagination and reconciled him to Egypt. He went on to say that he had reasoned himself into the belief that all religion is mere superstition; and that it mattered little what form it took, whether the elaborate ritualism of Egypt, or the simple worship of Israel. Thus he found himself without faith,

without hope, without God. This was not a happy condition of mind, and he sought to occupy his thoughts with the affairs of state, with the material well-being of the people, with the intellectual advancement of the nation, with art and letters, with anything and everything that would take him out of and away from himself; but all to no purpose.

"I was constantly thrown back upon myself, and forced to meditate, to ponder the great questions of life and death, and eternity; for no one can think at all without confronting these supreme thoughts. I was convinced that a man without religion, without God, is a deformed monster. But I could not force myself to worship at the impure altars of Egypt, nor join in its grossly sensual and idolatrous ritualism. This would be doing violence to my whole nature, for I knew and abhorred the priesthood and their priestcraft. It was in this mood that I turned again to the simple words of the Hebrew scribes, and saw once more a God who stood in filial relation to the world of men, and proclaimed to His children that righteousness and blessedness are one and the same, now and forever more. This cooled my mind and calmed my soul, and I lived again; for this God and Father was my God, and to me had He given the work and the glory of delivering His people from oppression and

idolatry. This, men of Israel, I believe I shall accomplish with your help, and the blessing of our God. The way will be long and hard, but will lead us at last back to our fathers, back to the promised land, back to the land of Abraham, and to the altar at Bethel."

At the close of the prime minister's address the chiefs of the Hebrew nation received Mousa back into the household of faith, the family of Israel, with a kiss of peace.

CHAPTER IX

"THE DEGRADATION"

So perfect was the system of priestly espionage that the prime minister's apostasy was reported to Rameses but a few hours after it took place. This disturbed the great king as nothing else had done since his reign began, for he fully realized the profound gravity of the situation. A crisis was at hand and the pharaoh knew he must act promptly and decidedly or the priesthood would excite the people to rebellion. His first resolution was quickly made—which was to take the priesthood completely into his confidence, as the best means of checkmating any plot against him and his dynasty. He therefore summoned the council of high priests and all the ministers of state to meet him at once in the throne-room for the conduct of a most serious matter pertaining to the holy church, and hence to the state.

Mousa was therefore greatly astonished on his return to Rameses-Tanis from Goshen to be ushered into the presence of the king and his

assembled court. He guessed at once the cause, and on entering made no attempt to take his place beside the pharaoh, but prostrated himself and remained thus till ordered by the king to stand. His eyes then met the king's and saw in them a fierce mixture of anger and reproach, together with a firm resolve not to spare him or his race. The silence was profound, until the chief of the council of high priests stood up and in solemn voice recited the charge of heresy and apostasy against a high priest of the holy church, and the prime minister of Upper and Lower Egypt.

The pharaoh then addressed Mousa:

"My lord primate, you have heard the solemn charge which our mother church has pronounced against you. Art thou guilty? Answer yes or no."

"Yes, my liege," was the awful sound that echoed and reëchoed upon the ears of king and court.

"Then know thy fate. First thou art degraded from thy holy office of priest within our mother church, and must henceforth lie under her curse. The patents of thy princely rank are here annulled. Thy wives, thy children, and thy estates are all confiscate unto the crown. Of property thou only shalt reserve enough to prolong thy wretched life,

that thou mayest live to think upon the awful nature of thy crime. No one shall help, and none shall harm thy person. Go hence, and live with thy rude race, whom we now pronounce accursed, and decree that they shall always be a race of slaves to the masters of this land."

Mousa bowed his head in humble submission to the judgment of the king, and then spoke out, "Will his majesty hear once more the voice of his servant before it is forever stilled?"

The pharaoh did not answer at once, and had not all eyes been fixed upon Mousa an expression of intense agony might have been traced upon the brow of the great Rameses. The king turned to the chief of the council of high priests and, after a brief conference, replied:

"Yes. In consideration of thy past relations to the royal house, and thy great services to the state, we will hear thee speak a word in explanation, but not in defence of thy crime against the church and state. Say on."

"My liege, your majesty and all thy noble court know that I am not of Egyptian blood—I am the 'son of Amram' and was born of Israel's race. By birth a Hebrew, I was by chance—and the kindness of the royal house—raised to rank and wealth and power, and best of all to close friend-

ship with thyself. Think thou, my liege and lords, of what I surrender at the bidding of my God. If I am therefore reckoned false to Egypt and her gods, I must be reckoned true to my own race, and to my father's God. That is all, my liege, I have to urge in explanation of an act which, whilst it is, as your majesty has said, crime against the king and gods of Egypt, is loyal duty to my own people and my God. And now, my liege and lords, farewell. Have pity on my people, whose noble, unyielding faith has won me back to my race and my religion. Let them, I pray, worship their God in peace, and your majesty will find them the most loyal of his subjects ——"

"There can be no loyalty," broke in the king abruptly, "when there is not perfect religious conformity; for the church and state are one. Obedience to the church is therefore the first act of loyalty, and until the Hebrews conform they are hateful rebels, and shall remain, as has been just decreed, a race of abject slaves to the masters of this land."

Mousa knew that Rameses was glad of this opportunity to declare his uncompromising zeal for the orthodox faith of the church in the presence of his court and before the council of high priests. The priests were now completely foiled, but the

Hebrews had to suffer in consequence. Mousa saw and clearly understood the situation. He saw that the pharaoh with all his show of authority was powerless to grant his prayer; that he was in fact forced by the priests to enslave and torment his race; and Mousa felt no resentment, but only pity for the pharaoh's boast and pomp of a power so hollow and so helpless.

The fallen prime minister was conducted to his apartment, but was not permitted to take leave of his wives or his children. He was only allowed to exchange his official Egyptian dress for the Hebrew garb which had been provided for him, and was then led outside of the gates of the city, and thus dismissed from the royal presence.

The prime minister's disgrace and degradation were soon known throughout the length of the valley of the Nile, and the Egyptians rejoiced at this new and convincing evidence of the pious zeal of their pharaoh. But Mousa had once been a priest and prince of the land, next in dignity and authority to the king himself, and this secured for him immunity from all insult or annoyance,—so natural was the reverence of the Egyptian for greatness, even though it be fallen greatness. Orders were given to all Egyptian officials in Goshen to see that Mousa was provided with the

necessities and comforts of life. He was to be exempt from slavery and all form of servitude, and permitted freely to go and come at will without let or hindrance.

The decisive and heroic measures that Rameses employed in dealing with the apostate prime minister and his rebellious race completely frustrated the plans of the priests. They had confidently expected that the pharaoh would adopt a mild and temporizing method of dealing with so great a personage as his prime minister, who had been his lifelong friend and favorite. So confidently in fact had they counted upon this that they had all their plans arranged for an open protest and rebellion, on the grounds that their holy church and their national gods were being dishonored by a heretic king. The most powerful priests throughout the land were involved in this plot; and the unexpected action of the pharaoh not only frustrated their disloyal schemes, but completely demoralized their order. The priests saw that they were no match for the wily Rameses, and each one sought to make his peace with the king with all possible haste. They knew he could, and feared he would, turn upon them and crush them.

The degradation of Prince Mousa and the curse decreed upon his race was a master stroke, and it

shattered at once the power of the priesthood by using the very means the priests had planned to use against the pharaoh. The priests had thought to appeal to the popular faith of the people against the heresy of the pharaoh; the pharaoh was now in a position to appeal to the popular faith against the rebellious machinations of the priests. He might have enlisted the popular sympathy at once by calling attention to the fact that he represented the popular religion, the faith of the people. He was the incarnation of the people's god, *Ra*,—whilst the priestly order worshipped Tumu. The position of the priests was therefore a perilous one.

Rameses had in truth dealt a master stroke, but it fell very heavily upon himself as well as upon the priesthood. He did not feel this in the moment of his anger against his prime minister and his triumph over the priesthood. But this stroke, while it freed him from the priest, had bound him to a policy of popular superstition and cruelty. He had indeed broken the power of the priestly authority, but must hence and forever remain bound to the gods he had created. And then as time went on he could not but remember what Mousa had been to him; what great services he had rendered; and something akin to remorse crept into his heart at times, and would not let him rest in peace. But

having once begun he could not now turn back, for the priest forever blocked all way of retreat and forced him on to further acts of wrong under the guise of religious zeal.

The open and bold refusal of the Hebrews to worship the gods of Egypt called attention to the relaxed condition of the laws of servitude throughout the delta. "These alien peoples had been treated too leniently since the Hittite war. They had too much time on their hands and used it to plan sedition"—so the people said, and it was believed therefore that the heresy of the Israelites was hatched in their hours of idleness. "Make them work harder, keep them fully employed, and nothing more would be heard about their religion and their God." Such was the cruel counsel offered to the pharaoh by his priestly advisers. He might have refused such advice and probably would have done so but for the fact that it fitted well the exigencies of the state just then. His multifold enterprises for improving and beautifying the land were now hindered by the want of workmen of all kinds, but especially of manual laborers. The pharaoh had till now relied mostly upon the labor of the Nubian and Lybian slaves which had been taken in battle. The intense hatred in which the memory of Cheops, the builder of the great pyramids, was held by the native

Egyptians had caused Rameses to determine that he would avoid the mistake of that pharaoh, and not draft native Egyptians into the hard labor required by his vast undertakings. Nor did he like the idea of impressing the mixed population of the delta, for by so doing he would produce a condition of unrest which might at any time break out in rebellion. But the present number of slave laborers was wholly inadequate to the requirements of state, and the addition of the Hebrews to the class of laborers would be most opportune.

But they could not conveniently be employed beyond the borders of the "Arabian nome"—certainly not outside the delta. It was therefore determined to erect two royal storehouses within this district. The Arabian nome, or Goshen, lay as we know between the two great cities of Heliopolis on the south, and Rameses-Tanis on the north, and was easily accessible from each: the situation of the storehouses would, therefore, be most available. And then this was the most fertile district of all Egypt, and with thorough cultivation could be made to yield a very large proportion of the produce with which these storehouses would be filled. It is very difficult for us to get an adequate notion of the vast extent of a royal—*i. e.*, national—Egyptian storehouse; for a storehouse, like a royal palace, was

not one huge structure, but included hundreds of structures of many shapes and sizes. It was in fact a store city, including all manner of buildings and all kinds of produce. Perhaps we can get some suggestion of its character when we remember the famine in Joseph's time, and the fact that the royal "store cities" of Egypt were drawn upon for seven long years to feed a hungry world.

A governor was now appointed over the land of Goshen, with instructions to build two vast "store cities," and to employ the slave labor of the Hebrew race for that purpose. It was also the duty of the governor to see that the land of his district yielded the greatest possible return, and he used every possible means to strengthen and enrich the soil. Labor cost nothing, and of course no labor was spared; and it was not long before the "Fields of Zoan" presented the most perfect system of irrigation ever seen in Egypt or any other land. Dykes and canals were the principal features of this system. The dykes protected the fields from the overflow in time of flood, and the canals supplied them with water in time of drought. The dykes, moreover, were so constructed as to provide the best of roads and highways along their banks. This work of agriculture employed a great part of the Hebrew population, and was the least severe, although the

most exacting, of all their allotted toil. It was exacting, in that it required them to labor from sunrise till sunset, thus allowing them no time for relaxation and social intercourse. It was comparatively light by reason of its very nature, for the agriculturist can only do so much and no more; the weight of his burden cannot be increased: it can only be prolonged. The work upon the store cities of Rameses and Pithom was of a different nature, as we shall presently see.

The fields of Zoan thus became "crown land," and its revenues went to fill the royal purse, and the treasury of the pharaoh was soon full enough to enable him to carry out his most extravagant plans of beautifying the land with costly statuary and architecture. But the labor required was great—quite as much as Cheops impressed for the building of his tomb, the great pyramid. The labor required by Rameses, however, was not concentrated, as had been the enforced labor of Cheops; but was scattered throughout the land, and did not impress the popular imagination with its cruelty as the building of the great pyramid had done, and continued to do. Still it was felt to be hard and cruel; and notwithstanding the fact that Rameses had the wherewithal to pay, yet he could not induce the native Egyptians to offer themselves as laborers, however great the

reward, and he would not force them. The work had then to be done by slave labor, and the present slave population was not sufficient. It therefore came to pass that the once mild and philosophic prince, anxious for religious reform, and the general betterment of humanity, became the cruel, slave-hunting Rameses II. Expeditions to Nubia and Lybia, for the capture of slaves, were fitted out in Egypt, and presented the appearance of armies of invasion, which in truth they were. By such means did Rameses provide the labor necessary to carry forward his great schemes of education and enlightenment, without letting the Egyptians see and feel their cost, either in money or humanity. The building fever now grew upon the pharaoh more and more, and would not let him rest. He was planning, planning,—always planning,—some enormous statue: some new architectural design: some novel structure of tomb or temple: some memorial to himself or his dynasty.

Self, self,—nothing but self occupied his thoughts and his imagination, waking or sleeping, until he actually came to regard himself as exempt from all law, human and divine. He was in the fullest sense a law unto himself, and to all the world beside. He could do no wrong; he could think no wrong; for what he did and thought created right, and to

oppose his will was the only possible wrong. There was no god but Rameses. Always a dreamer, Rameses' nightly visions now reflected and magnified into huge and sometimes hideous shapes, the thoughts and musings of the day. He dreamed once that his throne covered the whole earth, and rested on the necks of all the people of the world; that his head reached to the canopy of heaven; and the stars were the jewels of his crown. Again he dreamed that all the gods from above and below came to him, and, crouching before him in abject fear, confessed themselves impostors; but implored him not to utterly destroy them nor their earthly servitors, the priests.

But his dreams were not always of self-exaltation and glory. His long associations with "the son of Amram" had awakened a conscience within his breast that would not wholly die, and he sometimes felt its pang and heard its cry for vengeance at the very moment when his self-justification seemed the completest. He dreamed once that the whole land of Egypt had been transformed by his power into a beautiful garden full of the most perfect statues and buildings and memorial structures. But as he walked through this vast garden and approached the wonderful works of art, they proved to be constructed of the skele-

tons of human beings;—of men and women; of boys and girls; and everywhere a pinched and ashen face that pierced him through and through. He turned and tried to retrace his steps—to seek a retreat, but his way was blocked by a long procession of white-robed priests, who chanted their praises to Ra, and waved the pharaoh on and on, through the endless avenues of this hideous garden.

And then again, at times, the memories of the friendship he had known so long would steal into King Rameses' heart and make him almost wish that "Mousa mine" were with him once again. But the fierce pangs of conscience, and the gentle thoughts of other days, could not now change the pharaoh's course—could neither hinder nor force one royal act. The pharaoh's fate was fixed: his doom pronounced. He felt this once, and only once; and then he shut his eyes and sealed his heart forever, and could not, would not, feel or think, but must forever act; act, only act,—be always acting, and nevermore could think or be. Doing, an eternity of doing, was all the greatest monarch of the world could call his own. Such was the fate of the "Holy Father," the "Divine Rameses," the incarnation of Ra, upon his throne of infallible truth and universal empire.

But what is in store for the degraded prime min-

ister, the friendless, homeless "son of Amram"? who wanders all alone from hut to hut, forced to see and not be able to relieve the heavy toil and misery of his race—a race of slaves, and yet the sons of God? "The sons of God and slaves? This must not, shall not be." So thought this wandering son of Israel's race, and this thought possessed his soul. It took the place of wife and child, of home and friends, and every other thing of earth, and gave him in return the peace of God. The abnegation of the gods of Egypt by the great general and illustrious prime minister of Egypt, and his return to his own people and their God, caused great rejoicing throughout the fields of Zoan and strengthened many a wavering faith in Israel's God,—and this in spite of the fact that the report of the return of the son of Amram was accompanied by the king's decree for the rigorous enslavement of the Hebrews.

This act of Mousa's proved that the lot of a Hebrew slave, if true to his race and religion, was better than the highest place in the palace of the pharaoh without the God of Israel. The Egyptian officers sent to enforce the edict of the king were greatly surprised therefore to see the cheerful, the almost willing manner with which the Hebrews accepted their hard fate and obeyed the

orders of their masters. The general superintendents or taskmasters were Egyptians; but the immediate officers appointed over the laborers were of their own race. Each one of these petty officers was held responsible for the fulfilment of the task appointed to his squad. In case this Hebrew official was not able to get the required amount of labor out of his squad he was punished and removed and another Israelite appointed to his post. He might, however, at any time apply to his Egyptian superior for help in enforcing his orders. This however was seldom found necessary, as the Hebrews knew they could not lessen, but only increase the weight of their burdens by refusing to obey the orders of the officers set over them.

The tasks set them in the beginning were very heavy ones, almost too heavy to be borne, and kept them toiling on from dawn to darkness. But as time went by they gradually acquired a strength and skill in performing their work which enabled them to shorten the hours of toil; until they finally found themselves the masters of an increasing portion of each day for rest and social intercourse. This, the naturally good-natured Egyptian taskmasters did not mind, so long as the "tale of bricks"—that is the amount of labor charged to each squad—was accomplished. It might be sup-

posed that the Egyptian government would add to the tale of bricks on learning of the increasing skill and celerity of the Hebrew slave. But that was not their way. Everything was ordered by royal decree, and a decree having once gone forth it was like the "law of the Medes and the Persians" which saith "No decree nor statute which the king established may be changed." Change was a sign of weakness, of fallibility: the pharaoh knew all things and his knowledge could not be increased nor diminished. He knew, therefore, once and for all time the amount of labor a Hebrew slave could, and should perform: and so decreed: and that decree having been obeyed, the Egyptian taskmaster had discharged his duty to the crown, and the slave was free to come and go at his own pleasure.

And so it happened that the Hebrews found a constantly increasing period of each day for rest and social life. This respite from their tasks was, as we may suppose, chiefly occupied by the elders of Israel in instructing their tribes in the religion of their fathers, and in perfecting the laws and government of the Hebrew nation. This they were now prepared to do, for they had the counsel of the greatest statesman of the world, and from him originated every plan and principle of

their national government. But the tribal organizations and jealousies had grown very strong during their years of freedom and prosperity under the Hyksos kings; and their conflicting ambitions at times threatened to defeat all plans of national unity.

Mousa did not seek to weaken but on the contrary to strengthen the tribal governments. This was but to repeat on a smaller scale the policy which had united in one strong government the Egyptian principalities. He found, however, that it was easier to unite the rival princes of a great nation into one central state than to persuade the chiefs of a race of slaves that their strength and deliverance depended upon a union of all tribes under one trusted leader. And but for their common fate and common lot as slaves, Mousa never could have welded them together into one nation. When his plans were at last perfected he visited each tribe and explained to a council of the fathers all their conditions and requirements. From each tribal council representatives were sent to the national council, which consisted of seventy-two elders with power to choose a leader. Their lot fell upon the chief of the great tribe of Juda; and Mousa was declared the scribe and expounder of the law. His work of deliverance was now actually begun.

In his journeying from tribe to tribe Mousa selected a number of young men to whom he gave special instruction in civil and military law and order.

Chief among these sons of Israel was Hoshea of the tribe of Ephraim, who had served as an officer of some distinction in the Hittite war. He was therefore already known to Mousa, and to him was confided the whole scheme of government and final delivery of Israel. Nothing was withheld from this son of Nun, and he was brought in time to look upon himself as the heir and successor of Mousa. The fallen prime minister had not been permitted to take with him from his royal residence the papyri containing the writings of the scribes. He was not long however in securing copies of them all from the elders. He also found here and there amongst the tribes additional manuscripts, and what was of no less interest and importance, he learnt almost every day, as he went about amongst the Hebrews, some bit of oral tradition which gave a color and meaning to the writings which they could not have otherwise possessed. It was impossible for Mousa to discover at what time the sons of Israel began to write their history, but certainly not before their emigration to Egypt; and it was difficult to say to what period of their Egyptian sojourn the oldest manuscript belonged.

Again many of these writings treating of the same subject were variant in form. All the tribes traced their beginning to Abraham, as the common father of them all, but no two accounts agreed in all respects, for each one had its own tribal coloring and sought to magnify its own importance. But the conception of God as a king who held personal relations with their race was the same in all. Mousa fastened on to this sublime thought, and to the universal belief that Abraham was their common progenitor,—and upon these two foundation stones he began the construction of a history of the children of Israel, and a law for their government. He associated his brother Aaron with him in this great undertaking and the son of Nun became their chief scribe. But hardly had they begun to plan the character and scope of this great work, when an impulsive act of Mousa threw everything into confusion and necessitated his immediate flight from Egypt.

He had taken up his residence with his own tribe, of which his brother Aaron was now the chief, and it was his custom to spend a portion of each day wandering about amongst the people from tribe to tribe, observing and studying their manner of life, and traits of character; for whilst they were his kinsmen they were at the same time a strange

people to him. On the day in question he had been to Pithom, where one of the treasure cities was in the course of construction, and where he had witnessed the crushing toil of his people,—for they had not yet acquired the skill to lighten their burdens. He was returning to his abode, meditating upon the cruel hardships of his race, when, in a somewhat secluded part of a field, he came upon an Egyptian taskmaster maltreating a petty Hebrew official. He interfered and entreated the Egyptian to spare the Hebrew. But his entreaties had the effect of increasing rather than lightening the severity of the punishment. This exasperated the ex-prime minister of Egypt beyond endurance, and losing for the instant his heretofore marvellous self-control, he wrenched the pike from the hand of the Egyptian and struck him with all his might. Mousa was a large and very powerful man, and the one stroke proved instantly fatal. He now saw the insanity of his act, and knew that if it became known, no power—not even the pharaoh's—could save him; and with him would end his work for the deliverance of his race. He could not therefore throw his life away. That would be a great wrong against his people. He determined therefore to use every possible means for self-preservation; and with the assistance of the rescued Hebrew the first thing he

did was to dig a pit in the loose soil and bury the Egyptian. There was a search made for the missing official, but no traces of the tragedy were found; and Mousa began to think he might be safe from discovery.

But he was soon convinced to the contrary. Not many days after his impulsive act, as Mousa walked in the fields again, he came upon a Hebrew official beating one of his own race. This provoked his anger greatly, and in no very gentle manner he reproved the Hebrew. He said, "Is it not enough that our masters, the Egyptians, should afflict us, but must the sons of Israel afflict each other? Shame upon you! You don't deserve the name of an Israelite."

But the Hebrew did not relish this rebuke, and the superior air Mousa seemed to give himself, and he made answer, "By what authority dost thou, the degraded prime minister, interpose between me and my duty to the pharaoh? And who made thee a prince and a judge over us Israelites? Wilt thou kill me as thou didst the Egyptian officer the other day?"

Mousa now knew that his discovery was certain, and that his only safety was in immediate flight. But he could not go before seeing the elders of Israel, and the son of Nun was dispatched in all

haste with a message calling the elders together at once. Mousa first related to this council of his race the circumstances requiring his immediate flight. He then made a brief statement of what he and his brother Aaron had undertaken concerning a history of Israel, and a law for their government as a nation when their deliverance should be accomplished; and he prayed the chiefs and all the elders to aid this patriotic work in every possible way. He would endeavor to keep up a constant communication with them through his brother, who would keep him informed on all points of importance concerning their common race, and the attitude of the Egyptian government toward them. They must be patient and hopeful, and never waver in their faith that the God of Israel would send deliverance to His people, and that they would finally become a mighty people, more in number than the stars of heaven or the sands on the seashore. Mousa's words produced a profound effect upon the council of elders, and they pledged him their loyal support and prayed that the God of Israel might guide him in safety through the wilderness, and give him strength and wisdom to fulfil his great mission.

CHAPTER X

THE WAYSIDE WELL

THE fact that Mousa had slain the taskmaster was known to the local Egyptian authorities within a few days after the event. But Mousa was ignorant of this, and hence made no effort to escape the danger that threatened him; and it was not until he was charged with the awful deed by one of his own race that he had any thought of flight. However, he was for the moment much safer than he supposed, as it had been ordered by a special royal decree at the time of his degradation that he was not only to be free from servitude but exempt from arrest and all restraint on the part of the local authorities. No one would therefore assume the responsibility of apprehending the "ex-prime minister" of Egypt until commanded by the special word of the pharaoh himself.

Rameses was pained beyond measure on hearing of the great tragedy, and his first and only thought was to rescue Mousa from the fate that threatened him and must overtake him if he remained in Egypt. He therefore sent him word by a trusty

servant to flee the land at once. He also warned him not to seek refuge in any country holding friendly intercourse with Egypt; for in that case he would be extradited, as he (Rameses) must make a show of using all possible means to secure his punishment. The pharaoh also informed Mousa that the decree for his arrest would be withheld until he could have time sufficient to make his escape

This royal message was delivered to Mousa just as the council of elders had broken up, and just as he was on the point of making a very hurried flight. He now felt safe from immediate arrest and prepared for his departure with some degree of calmness and deliberation. First of all he gathered together the manuscripts which had either been given or lent him. He then procured a good supply of papyri and all other writing materials. These things he placed upon a pack horse for their transportation; he then set out for the peninsula of Sinai,—a mountainous district of triangular shape covering a distance of nearly one hundred and fifty miles in length,—on the west side—from north to south.

This land was for the most part a wild and barren region with a thinly scattered and mongrel population. The northern part of the peninsula

was inhabited, and held against all comers by a mixed race of fierce warriors called the Amalekites. These people were largely composed of political refugees from all the great nations round about. Many of them were of royal lineage, with good claims to the thrones of Asia, Syria, and Egypt. Cruelly driven out of their own lands on account of their royal blood, they met here on common ground and in their desperation made common cause against their unnatural countries,—against all the kingdoms of the world. In the central part of the peninsula were rich mines of malachite, copper, gold and all kinds of precious stones and minerals. These mines had been worked for hundreds, perhaps thousands of years by Egypt, and a strong garrison was always maintained here for their protection. This was then the best organized, the largest, and the most stable settlement in the peninsula of Sinai. To the south, and approaching the point of the triangle where the mountains towered to the greatest height, dwelt a pastoral people of Semitic race, being able to trace their descent by oral tradition to Abraham through Keturah, the father of the Kenites. The Kenites were a part of the great tribe of Midian, and the region in which they pastured their flocks was known as the Land of Midian.

Mousa knew thoroughly well the natural features of the peninsula of Sinai, and the character of its diverse population. He knew also that he would be gladly welcomed in the north by the Amalekites, for since his "degradation" he had received frequent messages from these desperate people, burning with revenge, offering him the dictatorship of their united forces if he would join them.

Had Mousa therefore been seeking political power or revenge he would have directed his course straight for the north and joined the Amalekites. This he might have accomplished almost within the day's journey. But other thoughts than those of political power and revenge filled the mind and soul of the son of Amram as he turned aside from the great highway leading from Pelusiam to Gaza and Kadesh, to Babylon and all Asia, and directed his steps toward the south, along the desert borders of the Red Sea. He thus turned his back upon the loud calls of strife and power and ambition, and recognized and obeyed the small voice of duty as it whispered its entreaties to his soul. He was more than a week journeying alone through this wild region, face to face with the awful stillness of simple nature.

What a change of scene it presented! From the flat and fertile land of the delta, teeming with its

multitude of slaves, to the wild and ever-changing desert, where no human form was to be seen, and no human voice to be heard. From the scorching sunlight of the Nile, with the tombs and temples and gorgeous monuments of the pharaohs, to the lofty mountains of Sinai, reflecting all the colors of earth and sky. It was well that Mousa had this period of absolute solitude, this time when he could commune with himself and be still, before he made his final transition from the rich and luxurious civilization of Egypt to the rude and altogether barren life of the Midian shepherds,—for this was now the kind of life that Mousa had chosen to live. He knew where the Midianites dwelt, and that they were of his own blood; and he determined to seek them and abide with them. It would not have been difficult for a man of Mousa's commanding appearance and gracious manners to commend himself to the chief of the tribe, but he was aided in his easy task by an incident most characteristic of all pastoral life in the East.

The shepherds in a mountainous country very naturally congregate at springs and wells and other water courses, and there as naturally results a struggle in obtaining water for themselves and their flocks. And—as in all the struggles of life —the stronger force the weaker back till they

have satisfied their own wants. There was little or no exception to this law of self-interest, and women had to take their chances with the other weaker members of the tribes; and when some man did aid one of the weaker sex in her struggle for water, or showed her any special consideration, it was a notable thing and at once proclaimed him a suitor for her hand, or for some other special personal favor.

We can well imagine therefore the excitement this grave and powerful stranger caused at this wayside well in the wilderness of Midian, when he forced the rude shepherds to wait until the daughters of their sheik had watered their father's flocks. The shepherds no doubt twitted the maidens in their rough way upon their new and gallant admirer; and the maidens doubtless accepted this rude bantering of the shepherds in good part, believing that one of them had found favor in the stranger's eyes. They were too modest, or too timid, however, to reveal their thoughts, and left the well and the stranger sitting there without offering him the hospitality of their father's tent. But their early home-coming surprised the chief, their father, and he asked the cause; and when they explained and he heard of the courteous conduct of the stranger he was annoyed that they had not offered him at once the hospitality of his tent. He

now sent them out to fetch him, that he might break bread with them. This is all very simple, but all very beautiful, and gives us a picture of the patriarchal life more vivid in its truthfulness than we could get from volumes of studied and elaborate narrative.

This Midianitish chief was both a sheik and an emir: as the sheik he was called "Jethro," "the head man"; and as emir his name was "Reuel," "the friend of God." Mousa did not reveal his full identity to his host, but said enough to satisfy him that his guest was a true son of Abraham, and a refugee from the wrath of the pharaoh of Egypt.

Of the seven daughters Mousa chose Zipporah, "the little bird," to be his companion, and thus became a member of the tribe and family of Jethro. Polygamy being the universal custom, no questions were raised as to whether he had wives in Egypt or not, and "the little bird" sang sweetly on his heart, and filled his tent with her simple song which brought a peace and a joy that the son of Amram had never known in the proud palace of the pharoah of Egypt. This joy was so sweet and pure and so unlike anything Mousa had ever experienced before, that for a time Mousa forgot Egypt, and his sorrowing kinsmen, and gave himself up to the absorbing, mellowing love of a husband and father.

But by and by he took "the little bird" into the most secret chambers of his soul, and made known to her his history and his mission. And, as is the wont of all simple hearts who truly love, Zipporah saw at one glance the supreme greatness of her lord, and the sublime character of his mission. She saw also that it meant, or might mean, separation from her,—her who loved him so. But if he was a true son of Israel, she would be a true daughter and gladly sacrifice her selfish love if in this way she might help in the great deliverance. As was the custom, Mousa dwelt with his father-in-law, and as he lived this shepherd life and wandered up and down through the land of Midian, and far beyond its borders, his thoughts were free to dwell upon his people and his God.

He thought of the great world far beyond the plains of Midian, where he had once lived and played so great a part. But he now looked back upon the past with a sanity of mind and a philosophical calm that gave to everything its true proportions; and he wondered that the unreal, the artificial, the mere outward seeming of things should so delude the world—should so engross the thoughts and lives of mankind. How small a thing the splendid pharaoh now seemed to his degraded and banished prime minister, as he

viewed him in his true relations to all time and eternity.

Thinking thus from day to day, and from year to year, with his "little bird" singing sweetly on his breast, and at his side, Mousa came to realize that his fate was the most fortunate, the most happy, the most blessed of all men. He saw plainly that his God, the God of Israel, had surely delivered him with His own right hand and with His outstretched arm from all the abominations of Egypt: and this son of Amram, this mighty man of God, was filled and thrilled with a joy unspeakable. But he must share this joy with his people, with all the true sons of Israel. This was his thought, and it was in this way that Mousa came to see that the redemption of Israel could only come through their complete deliverance, —not only from slavery, but from Egypt—the land of all abominations. His people must quit the land of the pharaohs—the land of idolatry and impurity, and dwell for a time at least as he was now dwelling, alone with nature and with God.

CHAPTER XI

THE RECALL

THE fact that Mousa had actually struck down one of their oppressors did more to fix him in the mind and imagination of the Hebrew people than his great renunciation and degradation had done. He was now their hero, their champion, and his bold deed fired the sons of Israel with a new ambition to be free. Mousa's brother Aaron, the chief of the tribe of Levi, took full advantage of these awakened feelings of race and religion, and impressed upon the people the great necessity of a closer union and organization of all the tribes, that they might be ready at any moment, should the occasion offer, to strike for their freedom and their God.

He cautioned patience, however, and assured them that an abortive attempt to gain their liberties would result in greatly increased hardships. "Organize! organize! organize! Learn to subordinate your personal, family and tribal desires and ambitions to the general good of all Israel, and we shall surely succeed." This was the lesson that the chief

of the tribe of Levi never tired of teaching and preaching throughout the "Arabian nome." He was a man of fiery eloquence, and his words burnt themselves into the very hearts of the Israelites.

The eloquence of Aaron was fully supported by the active deeds of the son of Nun, who was everywhere at once, and always ready to lend his aid to chief and elder in their efforts at organization and discipline. It may seem strange and most improbable that such a propaganda could be carried on amongst a race of slaves. But we must again remember that whilst the chief officers, or taskmasters, were Egyptian, the immediate overseers—*i. e.*, the officers who came in personal contact with the slaves—were Hebrews, and that they were reclaiming an increasing portion of each day in which they were free. Moreover, the Egyptians were a good-natured, careless people, and never borrowed trouble. That is to say they did not suspect an outbreak of the Hebrews, and therefore did not bother themselves about them one way or another. And then the Hebrews might scheme and plan and organize all they chose, they would still remain utterly powerless to resist the might of Egypt.

So the Egyptians reasoned, and the Hebrews were thus left comparatively free to discuss and plan and

organize for their final national emancipation. That it should ever be brought about by force of arms however seemed quite impossible—certainly not so long as the great Sisostris, Rameses the Great, ruled in Egypt. But the elders of Israel believed that their God was watching over them, and would, in His own time and in His own way, deliver them, His children, from their idolatrous oppressors. The son of Nun was a man of great resources and found means not only of keeping in constant touch with all the elders of Israel, but also of informing Mousa, more than a hundred miles away, of everything of importance that affected their cause.

And so the days and the months and the years went slowly by in the land of the Pyramids and the Sphinx, and the sons of Israel still remained the slaves of Pharaoh. But their slavery grew less and less oppressive until there came a time when it was hardly felt at all, so skilful had they become in discharging their tasks. They now had a very large portion of each day for themselves and as the government provided them with the necessities of life, their lot was by no means an unbearable one; it was far better in fact than most of the native Egyptian fellahin, who were required to pay a regular tax to the government, and whose disposition to indolence rendered this royal exaction a much

heavier burden to them than the "tale of bricks" was now to the Hebrews.

"The Field of Zoan" had been taken from the Israelites and was now "Crown land," and by the perfected system of irrigation and the many improved methods of agriculture was returning a large revenue to the king. But the Hebrew overseers saw plainly enough that forced labor could never be made to yield as great a product as free labor. They therefore determined to lease the land from the crown, as by so doing they could not only make a profit for themselves, but at the same time virtually emancipate their less fortunate kinsmen from a condition of slavery.

The formal leasing of the land was very easily accomplished, as the actual fact of a lease had already existed; for was not the Hebrew overseer required to return a certain revenue from the district or plot of land entrusted to his oversight? They had therefore but to offer a slight increase upon the returns required of them by the king. This was a very simple business problem and would seem to us of the modern world to require but a small degree of cunning. But it was in reality the shrewdest and most artful, the most far-reaching business transaction that ever took place in the ancient world and may be put down as the first in-

stance known in history in which the Hebrews outwitted their enemies, and grew rich upon their masters and oppressors.

The Hebrew officials of course allowed the laborer to share in the profits of his toil. This made him virtually a freeman—not, to be sure, free to waste his time in idleness, but free to enjoy the fruits of his own industry. The condition of the Hebrews both in the towns—"the treasure cities"—and on the land was fast becoming a very prosperous one. They accumulated property of every description. Their farms were covered with sheep and cattle and beasts of all kinds, and their strong boxes were filling with jewels and precious stones. So rapid was their growth from a condition of grinding servitude to one of comparative wealth that they might have forgotten they were still slaves but for the fact that they were not allowed to worship openly their God—that they worshipped Him in private went without saying.

But the amazing material prosperity of this race of slaves was not without its spiritual perils—as no prosperity ever is. They began to enjoy the "fleshpots of Egypt" and the more they gave themselves to this enjoyment the duller became their ears and the heavier became their eyes until they heard not and saw not the things of the spirit. And for al-

most the first time during their long sojourn in Egypt, many of the Israelites entered into the life of the Egyptians and participated in their sensual and abominable rites of worship. So widespread in fact became this moral infection, this spiritual leprosy, as to threaten for a time the very life of Israel. Hebrews took to themselves Egyptian wives and worshipped Egyptian gods. Whole tribes seemed on the verge of idolatry, and the sorrow of the true sons of Israel had never been so deep,—no, not even in the darkest hour of their heavy oppression. But the chief of the tribe of Levi and the son of Nun did not despair,—they worked and prayed the harder and their work and their prayers were aided by one of those awful human scourges which all men in all times have called providential visitations.

A most loathsome infection spread over the land of Goshen. The afflicted were first attacked with a sort of palsy, and then blindness, and their bodies rotted slowly away, emitting an unbearable stench that drove every one from them, and they were thus left to die alone. The startling thing about this infection was the fact that it attacked almost exclusively the Hebrews with Egyptian wives, and those who had given themselves up to the sensual rites of the Egyptian religion. This it would not

be hard for us now to explain upon purely scientific, sanitary grounds. But the Israelites saw in it only the wrathful visitation of an offended God.

The chiefs and the elders put on the badges of humiliation and mourning, and went from door to door weeping and bemoaning the sad state of Israel. When the plague had run its course and spent its force, the people were left in a very sober frame of mind and were disposed to listen to the voice of Aaron and other elders as they urged them to gird themselves up and make ready to leave this land of abominations and idolatry with its corrupting fleshpots, and journey back to the land of their fathers, of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—a land where they would be free to worship the God of Israel in peace and security. This was the first word uttered, the first movement made for the deliverance of Israel from Egypt,—and it came from the solitary son of Amram in the land of Midian.

The son of Nun had kept him informed both of the wonderful prosperity and the sad apostasy of Israel, and Mousa was now fully convinced that the delivery of his people could only be brought about by their absolute severance from Egypt and the Egyptians. He had communicated his thoughts on this subject to his brother and the son of Nun from time to time before the plague broke out; but

as soon as he heard of this dreadful calamity he knew that the time had come for enlisting all the chiefs and elders in the movement, and he urged Aaron to strike at once for the great deliverance; and events began now to shape themselves in the most marvellous way for its accomplishment.

The great Rameses suddenly sickened and died and was succeeded by his fourteenth son, who ascended the throne of the pharaohs as Menephtah II. As was the custom, the new pharaoh, on the day of his coronation, issued a decree granting pardon free and full to all exiles, except those of royal blood. This royal pardon included Mousa, and the son of Nun set out at once to carry the glad tidings in person to the land of Midian. Mousa heard the great news with mingled feelings of joy and pain, for he knew that his peaceful life of joy and love was now forever broken. His beloved "little bird" saw and read his heart and spoke out with the wisdom that can only come through love. She said, "Our love, my lord, has been sweet and blessed beyond the lot of mortals. It came from God, and shall we not give it back to Him? Go, then, my lord, and deliver thy people. If I may go it is well: if I may not go it is well." Mousa opened wide his great strong arms and drew his wife hard against his breast,—her soft face rested against his seamed

and furrowed cheek and then he spoke: "Thou, my little bird, hast the highest gift of wisdom because thou hast the highest gift of love."

When the children of Israel heard that the great Mousa was still alive, and that he was soon to return to them they rejoiced with a solemn feeling that the God of Israel had interposed His strong right arm and saved the son of Amram from destruction that he might be their deliverer.

The return to Egypt after so many years of exile of the once great prime minister was no slight event even to the Egyptians, and we can well understand what it must have been to the Hebrews. It was determined therefore to receive him with all the honors they could possibly bestow. The chief of the tribe of Levi, who was now the leader of the nation, went forth accompanied by all the chiefs and the elders of Israel beyond the delta,—a day's march into the wilderness to meet and escort the great Israelite to the field of Zoan. They found him with his wife and child resting by the wayside, and offered him the sceptre of Israel, which should rest with himself and his tribe until their deliverance was accomplished. Mousa gravely accepted the authority and responsibility of leadership, but without the titular honor; and the chiefs and elders one by one prostrated themselves before

him, in token of their willing obedience to his commands.

Mousa's first act on reaching the land of the pharaohs was to present himself before the king, and thank him for his gracious pardon. Menephtah had known Mousa as prime minister of Egypt, and when this old man with his long flowing hair and beard bowed his great form before him, the pharaoh could hardly believe him to be the once clean-shaven priest and prince of the royal palace. He received Mousa graciously, however, and to the astonishment of all his court dismissed his attendants that he might be alone with the returned exile. He then made known to Mousa the news he had just received of a powerful alliance which had been formed against Egypt by the Lybians, Greeks, Sicilians, and Etruscans and other peoples from the west. He could not offer the command of his armies to a degraded prime minister and apostate of the church, but he asked Mousa to give him and his generals the benefit of his counsel; and if they were successful in defeating their enemies, he would grant to Mousa any prayer he might make for Israel, except the privilege to erect altars and worship their God in Egypt. This the pharaoh could not grant without causing a revolution, as Mousa knew as well as he. And in this strange way it

came to pass that the son of Amram was once more a power in Egypt. His power, however, was exercised so secretly that not even the Hebrews, with the exception of his brother and the son of Nun, knew anything about it.

The son of Nun entered the Egyptian army and rose quickly to an important command. The war was a very fierce one and at the beginning went strangely in favor of the allied forces. But the strong hand of Mousa was felt more and more in the perfect discipline and organization of the Egyptians even in defeat; whilst the want of discipline was seen more and more to be the great weakness of the allied forces. This weakness finally proved fatal, and the bold invaders were forced to fly to the north and west by land and sea beyond the reach of Egyptian vengeance. But the army of Pharaoh proved as quick in pursuit as it had been resolute in defence and nine thousand three hundred and seventy-six prisoners of war were taken, perhaps the largest number ever captured before in one battle.

There were now slaves enough and to spare, and the Hebrews together with all the Asiatic inhabitants of the delta were given another respite from their toil. This invasion had been made by the western races, and naturally did not awaken much

sympathy among the Asiatics of the delta. So that the Egyptians had no fault to find, but only praise to give them for their conduct during this, the first great western war in which Egypt had ever engaged. But the pharaoh's eyes were now turned to the west and he saw in that way lay the future peril of Egypt.

The war being over and the victory gained, the pharaoh, true to his royal word, was willing to grant Mousa's prayer, which was that the Israelites might be permitted to leave Egypt with their cattle and all their belongings and receive a safe conduct to their country of Canaan. But with peace came also a general revival of prosperity throughout Egypt, and the Hebrews with their habits of industry and thrift began to gather more than their natural share of the fruits of this new prosperity. They did not listen therefore with a very keen interest to Mousa's plans for their emigration from the richest land in the world to what was to them an unknown wilderness.

It was in vain therefore that Mousa reminded them of the dreadful plagues that had so recently visited them and smitten them so sorely for their sins of idolatry, and warned them of the dangers that constantly surrounded them in the impure land of the pharaohs. But the fleshpots of Egypt

were too sweet to be given up forever just yet. They would go,—but at some future time; a more convenient season, when the cup of life in Egypt should not be so full of enjoyment as now. Mousa used every form of argument and persuasion within his power, but to no purpose; and as he could not and would not force them, he had to resort to that kind of stratagem so characteristic of the East.

It was given out through all the tribes by the chiefs and elders that the pharaoh had granted the Israelites leave to go a day's march into the wilderness to worship their God. This was to be a great day for Israel, and all true Israelites were exhorted, and expected to be ready. None were to be left behind, for all must receive this great blessing. The children, the sick, and the infirm were to be carried upon the backs of beasts. Oxen were to be driven for food and sacrifice. As none were left behind, all portable or movable property was to be taken along—for its safe keeping. The knowing Hebrews suspected the real object of this movement; but they were powerless to prevent it, as they could not refuse to obey a call to the altars of their God, for never before had such a liberty been granted by the pharaohs since the reign of the Hyksos, and not to embrace it would be little less than apostasy—and none of them were prepared

to take that stand so soon after the wrathful visitation of their God. This, the greatest day that Israel had known since the expulsion of the Hyksos kings, was looked forward to with intense enthusiasm; and preparations for the journey, and feast, and worship in the wilderness went forward in every family throughout Goshen.

But the priests of Egypt were not idle spectators of the preparations for this great Hebrew religious festival. They determined to prevent it at all hazards, even though it should force them into an open revolt against Menephtah and his dynasty. The grand vizier or prime minister of Egypt was now the high priest of the temple of Heliopolis. He was a man of uncommon ability, with an ambition that did not stop short of the throne. He saw that Menephtah was a weak man, and he hoped that this extraordinary exhibition of his friendship for the heretical Hebrews might be made to cost him his crown. This high-priest-prime-minister not only had the powerful body of priests to support him, but he suborned several of the most influential ministers of state, and had every reason to believe that the army would declare for him when he should unfurl his priestly banner in defence of the sacred gods of the Nile.

The conspiracy became known to the king, and

he saw that he was powerless either to punish or check the conspirators unless he broke faith with Mousa and refused to let the Hebrews go. But never had a pharaoh been known to retract his divine decree. Its fulfilment, however, could be deferred—indefinitely deferred. When, therefore, Mousa went to the royal palace to ask that a date might be fixed for the exodus of his people, the pharaoh put him off and told him that he would let him know when he had decided upon the time. But in the meanwhile the Hebrews would be required to fulfil their tasks according to the decree of his father, Rameses II. This they could easily do, and find plenty of time besides for their own private pursuits, and for the preparations for their great national festival, which now filled the mind and heart of all the Israelites to the exclusion of almost everything else, so effectively had Mousa worked upon the sentiment of race and religion. They could think, they could talk of little else than the great festival in the wilderness, when their race should once more erect public altars to their God—the God of Israel.

But hope deferred maketh the heart sick; and the Israelites began to murmur at the royal delays until their complaints almost assumed the character of a rebellion. This was promptly taken advantage

of by the priestly party, who pointed out to the pharaoh the danger of any royal clemency toward this hated race of heretics. This was also an opportune time to urge the pharaoh to increase the rigor of their servitude. The Hebrews had grown rich,—were in fact the most prosperous people of the land: and this had made them restless and ambitious. They should be made to work harder; should be given less time for seditious agitation; should, in a word, be made to feel that they were slaves in reality as well as in name. By such means only would the pharaoh be able to quiet their murmurs and hush their complaints. But their tasks—the tale of bricks—had been fixed by royal decree which altereth not. But no man, no creature in all this world, is so skilful in cruel devices as the priest; and to the priest belonged the glory of increasing the burden of the Hebrews without altering the letter of the royal decree. They were therefore not required to increase the tale of bricks—but they must in the future provide their own "straw." By this simple priestly device their burdens were increased threefold, which made it well-nigh impossible for them to meet the requirements of the law. They were therefore urged and beaten until their lives became more miserable than ever before.

Mousa determined now to see King Menephtah

again and remind him of the great service he had rendered the king and his dynasty, and implore him to at least permit the Israelites to celebrate the great festival upon which they all had set their hearts. They could not build their altars nor offer the sacrifices of bullocks in Goshen, as it would be a mortal offence against the gods of Egypt.

The pharaoh consented to this and agreed to fix the day as soon as he could consult with his ministers. But they were all strongly against such a concession to the Hebrews; for they saw in this prayer of Mousa's nothing but open rebellion. He had been a great prime minister and general of Egypt, and his degradation had naturally filled his heart with bitterness and revenge against Egypt. He now sought an opportunity of gratifying this revenge. He was known to all nations as the greatest living soldier, and would have little difficulty in allying himself with any power to whom he might apply. It was therefore suicidal in the pharaoh to grant him this prayer under any pretence whatsoever.

And so the pharaoh wavered; but as he wavered the land began to be afflicted with all sorts of pests, and Mousa plainly told the pharaoh—what he fully believed—that these afflictions were sent upon Egypt to punish the king for breaking his

faith with one who had served Egypt so long and so well. The pharaoh believed this even more fully than Mousa, and would gladly have let the Hebrews go to worship their God; but as great, if not a greater danger confronted him if he did. For the priests were now bold enough and felt strong enough to openly threaten him. But the afflictions of the people increased to such an alarming extent as to terrify even the priesthood; and they at last gave their unwilling consent, and the pharaoh signed and delivered to Mousa a decree by which the Hebrews were permitted without molestation to go a day's journey into the desert to worship their God. The decree also stated that they should be permitted to take with them whatever they thought necessary to the proper observance of their religious rites.

CHAPTER XII

THE DELIVERANCE

THE magician was a very powerful person in ancient Egypt and his office and functions were well recognized and respected, as well as feared, by the whole nation. He was a member of the higher priesthood and was trained from a very early age in the practice of his profession. He was called the "Man of the Roll," and the "Master of the Secrets of Heaven." Men of the highest birth and rank belonged to this order; and the pharaoh himself, whilst he did not need to practise the occult art—as he was supposed to possess infallible wisdom and divine power—was nevertheless initiated into the magician's mysterious secrets. In fact no one could thoroughly understand and practice the amazing intricacies of the priestly ritual without a long and careful training in magic; for the temple ritual of Egypt was in reality—as all rituals are more or less—a magical formulary, the proper observance of which bound the god in whose honor it was recited to grant the prayer of the priest.

But nothing less than perfect exactness in word

and movement, (*i. e.*, genuflections), could force the god to grant the prayer, if he were not so inclined. If, however, he were a good-natured, friendly sort of deity; or if the magician was a favorite of his, a few slips in the performance of the ritual might be overlooked, but never willingly indulged. The office of a magician was then no ecclesiastical benefice without corresponding duties, it was no sinecure. On the contrary, it required continuous study and practice in order to acquire and retain the ready skill and grace of the ordinary ritualist; but to be able to practise the occult arts of a priestly magician necessitated a life of temperance, austerity, and severe personal discipline.

The functions of a magician were not wholly ecclesiastical. He was an astrologer and a physician as well as a priest. But whatever he did was enveloped in mystery, and mystery has always played, will always play, the controlling part in human life. There are more things in heaven and earth than science and philosophy have ever dreamed of; and it is this impenetrable mystery, this unknown and unknowable element that dominates the soul of man and will not let him rest content with the things of sight and sound,—the things of the natural world. This has always been so, must always be so, and the magician, the charla-

tan priest,—the "Master of the secrets of heaven," —the "Holy Father"—all know and practise upon this universal fact of human nature for their own purposes. This was so in ancient Egypt, and is so to-day in the present world. The magician, *i. e.*, the priest, has always and everywhere claimed that to him, and to him only, is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God; whilst the prophets, philosophers, poets, and all true men of God bow in reverent silence before the awful problems of life and death, and trust in what they cannot know.

That the priestly magicians of Pharaoh's court were able to perform what the people regarded as miracles we cannot doubt; nor can we doubt the truth that Mousa took advantage of the awful plagues that swept as scourges over the land of Egypt. He proclaimed them to be the wrathful visitations of the offended God of Israel. And so insistent was he in attributing the miseries of Egypt to their persecution of the Israelites, that the pharaoh, the priests, and all the people began to feel that Mousa spoke the truth, and that the Hebrews were a positive curse upon them and their land, and must therefore be got rid of at any cost. And so strong did this feeling become at last that the pharaoh not only gave his consent to the Hebrew exodus, but issued a formal decree that they

should go at once, and take everything with them, that nothing of theirs might remain behind to pollute the land of the Nile.

So hurried in fact was the enforced departure of the Israelites from Egypt that they had not sufficient time to make bread of the dough which was already prepared for the baking. But there was even in the confusion of so hurried an exodus a system of discipline maintained; and the Israelites stood upon the order of their going—the great tribe of Judah leading the way, and the other tribes following in the order of their dignity and importance. They were not provided with the safe conduct that Menephtah had at first promised Mousa; but orders were given that they should be permitted to pass unmolested through the strongly guarded gates of the great northeastern wall, which commanded the highway from Egypt to Canaan and the far East.

But what was the astonishment of all Egypt, when it was learned that the Hebrew host did not pass through the gate of the great wall but turned aside from it on their left, and marched southward, along the line of the arm of the Red Sea toward the wilderness. What could this mean? was the exclamation on everybody's lips, and the pharaoh and his court were puzzled and alarmed at they knew not what.

But before they could deliberate and decide upon any line of action, the Hebrew host had disappeared in the wilderness, and the once fair fields of Zoan were left a desert waste, with the treasure cities of Rameses and Pithom standing out in solemn silence in the midst of the depopulated land of Goshen. The Arabian nome, the most fertile part of the delta, was now a wild desolation; and the difficulties of its repopulation and cultivation confronted the pharaoh with startling abruptness. He could not let this, the most productive of all the crown lands, lie fallow. But the Hebrews had occupied this nome for hundreds of years, and had now gone and left their curse upon it, and it would be impossible to induce the native Egyptians to occupy it. He might force the recently captured prisoners of war to work this district had they not been already divided up amongst their captors, and thus scattered throughout the land.

The more the pharaoh and his court deliberated upon this problem the more serious it appeared, until it was determined that the Arabian nome could only be occupied and cultivated by Hebrew labor. An order was therefore hurriedly issued for the recall of the Israelites so soon as they had performed their rites of worship; and a messenger was dispatched in haste, who delivered the royal com-

mand to Mousa on the seventh day after their departure from Goshen. Mousa gave an evasive answer to the royal command; but the messenger was convinced from what he saw that the Hebrews had no present intention of returning to Goshen. The scourges of Egypt had now abated—owing as the people firmly believed to the arts of the magicians, and the prayers of all the priesthood. The proper time having been observed for mourning, Menephtah, on the urgent appeal of the priesthood and his court, gave orders for the pursuit, capture, and return of the Hebrews to the land of Goshen. This seemed a very simple matter to accomplish, as the Israelites were hemmed in by the desert and the waters of the Red Sea; and the Egyptians made merry over the very stupid blunder the Hebrews had committed in turning aside from the gateway of the East and marching blindly into a wilderness of sand and water. But they forgot in their merrymaking that the Hebrews were led by the once prime minister of Egypt, who was allowed to be the greatest soldier and the ablest strategist of the world, and who had just saved Egypt from the fierce assault of the powerful allied nations of the West.

This last fact, however, was only known to the pharaoh and his immediate advisers. That the

Hebrew leader had good reasons for not taking the direct and easy road to the east the Egyptians might have known, had they stopped to consider the matter with any degree of deliberation. But they were never a discerning people; and were singularly wanting in that lucidity of judgment which has always characterized the Hebrew race; and now that they were for the moment delivered from the plagues, which had so long and so sorely afflicted them, the Egyptians lost their heads and gave themselves completely up to the optimism which was so natural to them. It was quite impossible therefore for them to see anything but the easy capture of the fleeing Israelites. It was impossible in fact for the Egyptians to believe for one moment that there was any possible way for the Hebrews to escape. They were hemmed in by the sand and the water and would prove, must prove easy captives. That was all Pharaoh and his ministers were capable of seeing and believing. It was simply impossible for the Hebrews to escape.

But it was the ability to perform the impossible that had made Mousa the greatest man of his generation. Any man may do the possible; it is only the supremely great man that does the impossible—that is as mankind reckons the impossible. Mousa knew the terms of the problem he was given to

solve as no one else knew or could know them. First of all he knew perfectly the extent and the strength of the Egyptian empire, as not even the pharaoh knew them. He knew that the highway to the east was guarded by the very best of Egypt's soldiers, and infested on every side by powerful warlike tribes to whom brute force was the only law; and he saw that either of these conditions would prove fatal to his work of deliverance—for the Israelites were not yet prepared to withstand any powerful foe.

These were the facts fatal to the march of Israel by the highway to the east. But the road through the wilderness to the peninsula of Sinai was not quite the forlorn hope the Egyptians supposed. There were times, it was true, when the waters of the two seas almost kissed each other. But there were other times when they suddenly withdrew their outstretched arms from what had seemed to be a longing for an embrace—withdrew and left a wide expanse of dry land behind upon which an army might encamp. Mousa had lived for forty years near these waters, and had witnessed more than one such a sudden withdrawing of the arms of the two seas. He had in a word studied the ebb and flow of these waters with an eye to just such a possible exigency,—not however as the leader of

Israel but as the commander of the Egyptian army.

It was now the season when the northeast wind usually prevailed, and Mousa had timed the exodus of Israel accordingly. He knew that they would be free from pursuit for two months or more, as the Egyptians would require that time for the proper funeral rites for their dead; and within that period he felt certain that a chance of crossing the Red Sea would offer itself. The tents of Israel were therefore pitched at a spot most favorable for a quick passage, so soon as the conditions of wind and wave should appear. The first camping ground was in a fertile and well watered district, where the cattle and sheep were easily fed. But the people were not permitted to fold their hands in idleness and inaction—for Mousa knew that there was nothing so demoralizing to freedmen as a want of active, healthful labor.

Organization and discipline were the first and the necessary conditions for the salvation of these liberated slaves. Nothing could be done, nothing could be expected until these two primary conditions should be complied with. Mousa knew as no one else could possibly know the great difficulties that confronted the exodus of Israel from Egypt. He knew that at the best the crossing of the Red

Sea would be attended with the greatest difficulty and danger, and that without organization and discipline it would be quite impossible. The details of this all important work of organization were committed to the son of Nun, whose brilliant exploits in the last Egyptian war had given him a name and an authority that commanded the universal respect and obedience of the Hebrews.

The host of Israel had not come empty-handed out of Egypt; they had brought with them all their property, including jewels of silver and jewels of gold. But besides these articles of high value they had been instructed to bring with them the tools of the smith and the carpenter, and they were thus able to provide themselves with both the instruments of war and peace.

We see then that the Israelites even at the time of their first encampment were not a mere rabble, but an organized and disciplined community in which each man knew his place and his duty. And thus they held themselves in readiness for the passing of the waters when the time of their subsidence should come. But it came not! And behold a great cloud filled the western horizon! What could it mean? It was the dust of the chariot wheels of the pharaoh and his army! And Israel was now caught between the chariots of Egypt and the

waters of the sea, and its capture or utter destruction seemed inevitable. The banners of Menephtah drew nearer and nearer, and the people stood still and lifted up their voices in loud and bitter complaint against their leader, and with cutting irony asked Mousa if he had brought them into this wilderness to die because there were no graves in Egypt? For if the pharaoh had even worked them to death they would certainly secure decent burial —which was a thing impossible here. For Israel had learnt in Egypt to have some regard for the manner of their burial.

Mousa heard these murmurs and complaints of Israel with a silent composure which exasperated the people almost to the point of frenzy, and they were about to lay violent hands upon him when he opened his mouth and in the solemn tones of a perfect faith said:

"Fear not. Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord which He will show you this day; for the Egyptians which ye have seen this day, ye will see them again no more forever."

The people stood and listened and gazed in awe and wonder, and as they stood still and gazed, they felt a strong east wind as the breath of God in their faces, and Mousa knew that the hour of their deliverance had come.

"Go forward" was the simple command that sounded out from the lips of their leader and was repeated by every chief and elder, and officer of Israel, until the face of every man, woman, and child was turned toward the sea. But lo! as they advanced the sea receded, the waters rolled back, and the host of Israel marched on dry ground through the bed of the waters to the other side; for as the wind rolled back the waters it also dried the sandy ground.

The Egyptian priestly prime minister was in command of the pharaoh's army, but the place of honor was given to the king's son, who led the column of chariots with great impetuosity in hot pursuit. But what had been dry land to the light-footed Israelites became a muddy morass to the heavy-wheeled chariots of the Egyptians. They drave heavily—and the horses pulled and strained and floundered all night long, but in vain; and when the day dawned the army of the pharaoh was seen to be in hopeless confusion, whilst the Israelites were chanting songs of deliverance on the other shore. The Egyptian commander, fearing the Hebrews would take advantage of the exhaustion and confusion of his army, ordered a retreat.. But it was now too late to retreat. The east wind ceased to blow and there was for a time a dead calm, which was gradually

broken by the hoarse and sullen roar of the waters returning to their accustomed beds,—and the horse and his rider were swallowed up by the mouth of the sea.

The Israelites witnessed from their safe place of refuge the sudden destruction of their powerful enemies with feelings of wonder and awe. From a danger that threatened to be their utter destruction they had passed in a single night to a condition of perfect safety: from the pangs of the greatest terror to the thrills of the greatest joy: from a race of slaves they had suddenly been changed to a free people; from strangers and pilgrims in a hostile land they had become a nation whose governor and king was the Lord of Hosts. This had all been wrought in a few hours without the loss of a man or the lifting up of a hand in battle. Was it possible for these people so suddenly delivered from the mightiest nation of the world to doubt that the God of their fathers—of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob —had wrought this great miracle to confirm their faith, and to seal them to Him as His chosen people? And reason as we may, even now in the light of the many centuries that have passed since then, have we any better explanation to offer than this, if you please, childish faith that the Israelites confessed on the banks of the Red Sea?

Perfect faith brings always and everywhere perfect joy, and the Israelites had now come to the time of their first national rejoicing. The Hebrew word for a religious festival signifies a dance, and dancing has always been a means of expressing joy and thanksgiving in the religions of the east. What more natural therefore than that the redeemed Israel should dance before their God with joy and thanksgiving? But this religious dancing was always attended with singing; and what a theme was now presented to the devout and patriotic heart of a poet—"The destruction of the army of Egypt and the deliverance of Israel!" And who could better realize what had been wrought or express the sublime faith of Israel than he who had silently trusted in the Lord, and waited patiently for His salvation?

The mind and soul of Mousa had, since his degradation, been too full of great thoughts to permit a fluent utterance by word of mouth; but the deep joy of his heart now poured forth in unpremeditated strains the first national hymn of Israel. This national anthem was recited by the chief of the tribe of Levi, and sung and danced antiphonally by the vast host. The men of Israel took up their positions on one side and the women on the other and thus they sang and danced before the Lord:

Women:

I will sing to Jehovah, for He hath triumphed gloriously;
The horse and its rider hath He hurled into the sea.
Jehovah is my victory and song: He is my deliverer;
He is my God, I will praise Him;
The God of my fathers, I will exalt Him!

Men:

Jehovah is a hero of war: Jehovah is His name!
The chariots of Pharaoh and his might He cast into the sea:
His chosen captains were drowned in the weedy sea.
The depths covered them:
They sank to the bottom like a stone.

Women:

Thy right hand, O Jehovah, glorious in power,
Thy right hand, O Jehovah, broke in pieces the foe.

Men:

In the greatness of Thy excellency Thou hast overthrown them that opposed Thee,
Thou didst let loose Thy fiery indignation, and it consumed them like stubble.

Women:

Before the breath of Thy nostrils the waters piled themselves up;
The flood stood up like a dam —
The waves were congealed in the midst of the sea.

Men.

The foe said: "I will pursue; I will overtake;
I will divide the prey; I will get my revenge on them,
I will draw out my sword and destroy them."

Women:

Then Thou breathedst with Thy wind; the sea covered them;
They whirled down like lead in the rushing waters.

Men:

Who is like unto Thee among the gods, O Jehovah?
Who is like unto Thee, so great in Thy majesty!
So fearful in glory: doing such wondrous deeds!

Women:

Thou stretchedst out Thy right hand,
Then the earth swallowed them up.

Men:

Thou leddest by Thy grace the people whom Thou didst redeem,
Thou leddest them by Thy strength to Thy holy habitation.
The people shall hear it and shall be afraid,
Trembling shall seize the inhabitants of Philistia.

Women:

The princes of the tribes of Edom are in terror;
The mighty men of Moab, trembling seizes them;

Men:

The inhabitants of Canaan melt for fear!
Fear and dread fall on them,
At the greatness of Thy arm, they stiffen in terror like stone,
Till Thy people, O Jehovah, have passed over;

Women:

Till Thy people, whom Thou hast made Thine own, have passed over;
Till Thou hast brought them in and planted them on the mount of Thine inheritance.

Men:

The place, O Jehovah, which Thou hast made Thy dwelling;
The sanctuary, O Jehovah, which Thy hands have prepared!

Women and Men:

Jehovah is King forever and forever!
For Pharaoh's horse and his chariots, and his riders went into the sea,
And Jehovah brought back over them the waters;
But the children of Israel went on, dry, through the depths.

CHAPTER XIII

AUTHORITY BRINGS RESPONSIBILITY

THE passage of the Red Sea and the deliverance of the Israelites out of the hand of the Egyptians may be explained as a natural phenomenon: but that it was and always will be regarded by the Hebrews as a mighty miracle there can be no doubt.[1] This universally conceded event, whether natural or supernatural, settled at once two matters of the first importance: it separated the Israelites forever from the land of Egypt with all its abominations, and it established completely the authority and leadership of Mousa. The Israelites were now a distinct, a specially chosen people, "hewn from the

[1] There has ever been, and will ever be, these two ways of accounting for this marvellous event. The priests of Memphis (according to Artapanus, who wrote perhaps a century before Christ) saw in the passage of the Red Sea by the Israelites a natural phenomenon, and attributed it to the knowledge and skill of Mousa, who had carefully studied the ebb and flow of the sea, and led his people through it when the sand was bare. But the priests of Heliopolis, on the other hand, saw in the escape of the Hebrews from bondage and the destruction of their Egyptian masters, the hand of the God of Israel. Mousa, they believed, "struck the waters and they turned back." (See Proeparat ix. 27, 436.)

rock" by the hand of Mousa. Jehovah was their God, and Mousa was His prophet.

But if it established the authority of Mousa, it also increased enormously his burden of responsibility; for however severe their hardships in Egypt the Israelites were always given some sort of an abode, and were provided with food enough to keep them alive and able to work. They had never, therefore, been thrown upon their own resources for their daily wants. They had been treated as slaves on the one hand, and children on the other, and were thus wholly incapable of providing for themselves. There were, however, as we know, many individuals, many families, who were not only competent to look after their own wants but who had accumulated considerable property, even under the condition of slavery. But the great mass of the people had accepted their fate as slaves and had become accustomed to enforced toil and irresponsibility. Their emancipation suddenly released them from this enforced toil, but their new-gained freedom did not bring with it the means or the ability to provide for themselves; nor did it produce an immediate sense of personal responsibility. These essential qualities of a free people had to be developed and trained before the Israelites could be built up into anything resembling a nation. This was now

the supreme task set before Mousa, the mighty problem which he, and he alone, could solve.

His authority was now complete, but so also was his responsibility; and the redeemed host of Israel turned to him, not only as to the prophet of the God of Israel and their divinely appointed leader, but as their governor, their father, and they looked to him for country and home; for food and raiment, and every necessity of life. Few men,—perhaps no other man who has ever lived in the world,—save one, could have faced such awful responsibilities without a feeling of utter helplessness and despair. He had brought a vast multitude of men, women, and children out of a land of plenty into an uninhabited wilderness, where they were homeless and countryless, and he must provide both, or see them perish before his eyes.

This in short was the immediate problem that confronted this aged prophet of God when the waves of the Red Sea had closed over the war chariots of Egypt; and nothing but the "directing, piercing, elevating sense of God's presence" could have enabled him to look upon this task undismayed. But Mousa had not stumbled by mere chance into such a position of absolute authority, vast responsibility. He had reached this height of knowledge, and wisdom, and faith, by slow de-

grees—by regular and ever advancing steps; and the great deliverance which seemed to be the work of a few hours was only made possible by years of patient endeavor. The miraculous crossing of the Red Sea was but the last and culminating event of a long series of efforts, every one of which was a necessary link in the chain of cause and effect. This "supernatural" event could never have taken place had not Mousa fully mastered all the details of the natural phenomena that led up to it. It was obedience to the heavenly vision,—to the revelation that God made to him from day to day, and year to year through his own consciousness—that enabled Mousa to see and comprehend the character and conditions of the problem that now confronted him and called to him for a solution. For apart from his divine call to be the redeemer of his race, Mousa, as we know, was especially trained for just the sort of work that he now saw before him. He had moulded the disorganized and contending factions of Egypt into the greatest nation of the world. The problems of statesmanship, however perplexing, were therefore not new to him, for he was by nature and training the greatest statesman of his time,—and perhaps of all time.

Divine inspiration flows and only flows through natural channels. It is only through nature that

one can reach up to nature's God. By nature is meant every faculty of the mind and heart as well as the material world about us, the globe on which we stand, and the starry heavens into which we look. The human, the natural faculties of the mind and heart must be drawn out and trained to their utmost capacity by righteous thought and deed, before the soul can have any true vision of the divine. We therefore see in this great prophet-judge of Israel one of the most accomplished statesmen the world has ever known; and certainly the ablest general of his own time. We see a man of the greatest possible worldly wisdom and experience, who had never tempted fortune by trusting anything to luck; and he is not likely to do so now. His firm faith in the divine guidance—in Providence—did not weaken his hold upon the natural and rational means for the accomplishment of his stupendous work. It strengthened it in every way, and now as he turned his eyes away from the awful calamity which had befallen the Egyptians, and gazed solemnly at the lofty, barren and threatening peaks of Mount Sinai,—whither the host of Israel must be led—he did so with the calm assurance of a faith founded upon knowledge and experience.

He knew every pass and every valley; every

wady, spring, lake, edible lichen, and water course; every spot of fertile ground and every arid waste, from the Red Sea across the peninsula of Sinai to the River Jordan. He was also acquainted with the strength and character of the various tribes scattered over these wild regions. These points of topography he had carefully traced upon a papyrus map, a copy of which was in the hand of his minister and general, the son of Nun. Moreover Mousa, during his lonely residence in Midian, had made a thorough study of the fauna and flora of the peninsula. He knew what animals and birds, what plants and shrubs and edible fungi the wilderness contained, and where they were to be found. He had studied these things with a view to the actual circumstance in which he now found himself placed as the responsible head of his race, and when he gave the order that Israel should break camp, leave the coast, and proceed into the mountain wilderness, it was in a firm faith in the Providence of God, founded upon a knowledge of the land and a clearly defined policy and a mature purpose of what he meant to accomplish.

But if Mousa could not share the authority and responsibility of his mission with any one else, he could divide the labors with others, and he now placed his brother, the venerable chief of the tribe of

Levi, at the head of the prophets to look after all matters of faith and worship, and Hosea, the son of Nun, was made commander-in-chief of the army. The army consisted of several small but well organized bands of warriors, carefully selected from the younger men of the various tribes and capable of very swift action and easy mobilization. Each band was a unit in itself and prepared at any moment for either united or independent action.

The Israelites proceeded on their journey in detached columns and by tribes. At the head of each tribe, or column, marched one of these well-trained bands of warriors, which as they advanced constantly deployed to the right and left to guard against the danger of any lurking foe. These tribal bands of young warriors were so well trained, so agile, and withal so powerful as to be capable of withstanding almost any odds that the wild tribes of the wilderness might bring against them. The host of Israel was thus spread out over a very wide expanse, and so irregular and circuitous seemed their movements, as to give to an onlooker the impression of indecision and a want of unity in organization. But this loose and irregular order of march was wisely designed for purposes of health and cleanliness and that the people might be better pro-

vided with water and the various edibles the wilderness contained.

The first march, which occupied three days, was attended with very little discomfort, as the Israelites carried food and water enough to last them during this journey, and when they pitched their tents at Ayun-Mousa—Springs of Mousa—it was with the first definite, though very faint feeling of a national spirit and a national faith in the God of their fathers. The place of the first encampment of Israel in the wilderness had been chosen by Mousa before he left the land of Midian for Egypt, and was well suited for the prolonged stay that Mousa knew would be found necessary for purposes of organization, education and government. He knew that nothing could be accomplished without a spirit of national unity and loyalty; but he knew also that the tribal traditions, ambitions, and prejudices could not be ignored and his great endeavor now and ever after was to secure national unity whilst guarding the tribal rights and traditions of the people; for there could be no loyalty to the prophet or leader of all Israel without a first loyalty to the chief of the tribe. The great work of Mousa was to make the people see and understand that unity was essential, not only to nationality, but to their tribal salvation.

Does it seem strange that this was not a self-evident truth? Perhaps so; and yet it has always been, and is to-day, the hardest lesson for men to learn. What could not be accomplished if people would sink their petty, personal, selfish differences and unite for any good purpose? They will do so in times of threatening destruction, of imminent peril; but when the immediate danger is past they fall apart again, and forget the general good, the general safety, in the pursuit of their personal, tribal, partisan ambitions and grudges. Such was the character of the Israelites, and it required all the experience, all the wisdom and the statecraft, and all the mighty genius of Mousa to hold them together until they should come to their own in the land of Canaan, the land of their fathers, of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This was now his work,—this the fulfilment of his mission, and we shall follow him until we behold its consummation.

CHAPTER XIV

THE FINAL CHOICE

Mousa had now come to feel and know that there was a directing hand behind the universe, and that he was the instrument in that hand for the deliverance of his race, and the revelation to the world of "Jehovah" as the One and the only true God. This revelation had been made known to Mousa through the gradual unfolding of a character and a purpose in the universe—a character and a purpose always good, always benevolent; until he saw and felt the presence of one supremely great, and supremely good Being—the creator of the world, the "God of Love."

To think that the course of his own life,—from his cradle on the bosom of the Nile, through the palace of the pharaoh to almost supreme authority and power in Egypt; to think of his degradation and flight, and the crossing the Red Sea, and the position he now held as the saviour of his people:—to think of all this as coming about through mere chance,—through the blind operation of forces without intelligence, without consciousness, with-

out purpose, was impossible. There was, there must be character and design behind the outward show of strife, and the apparent confusion of things, and that character and design were the Expression of a Conscious Being—a God of Love. And thus the idea of a real monotheism was born into the world. It came not of subtle philosophy, nor the cunning wit of man. It was born of sorrow and suffering; it came by the travail of the human soul, it came as the sole inheritance of a race of slaves. It had its beginning in the son of Amram as he sorrowed on the banks of the Nile, and its full revelation came when the Son of Mary was nailed to the tree. This is the only explanation of the faith of Israel. This and this alone will explain how the Hebrews first obtained and forever clung to the sublime idea of "Jehovah" as the one God of the universe. We know that they frequently lapsed from this grand idea into idolatry, and tried so often the patience if not the very faith of Mousa. Yet they always recover themselves.

All the nations of the world have, it is true, conceived and developed a frame of mind which sees and holds fast to the idea of something above human power and human intelligence; but Israel alone of all the nations of the world has risen to the stupendous thought that this superhuman

power is one living, conscious, benevolent God; and it is not possible to explain on any human grounds how this faith was obtained and has been held. Simplicity and sublimity are here combined as nowhere else in the whole realm of thought; and the more we progress in human wisdom, the more we know of the world of nature, and the mind of man, the more we feel the truth of the simple and sublime faith of Israel—the more we realize that there is a conscious power behind the universe that makes for righteousness. This was the thought that now possessed and gave strength to this first prophet of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai as he prayed for a wise and understanding heart that he might know how to judge righteous judgment in bearing rule over these weak and helpless Hebrew children.

The military organization of the Israelites was of the very first importance, as it was the only possible form of government for the present; and its power and efficacy as a means of defence was soon to be severely tried. The Amalekites as we know were of no special race or tribe, but were a compound of political refugees—and in some instances, no doubt, criminals—from all the great nations round about. These expatriated unfortunates were bound together, as we have seen, by two common

and very strong sentiments, namely, hatred and revenge. These fierce passions took the place of love of race and country. They were therefore ever ready to join their forces with any tribe or people in any strife whatever, that promised to gratify in any way their hatred and revenge. They had tried to induce Mousa at the time of his flight from Egypt to accept the leadership of their band. And now that the Israelites under his leadership had successfully revolted against the Egyptians,—had made the marvellous passage of the Red Sea, and were actually in the peninsula of Sinai, not far removed, they felt certain that they could induce Mousa to become the leader and chief of the joint hosts of the Israelites and Amalekites in an invasion of Egypt, with its assured conquest.

The present chief of this motley though very war-like community was no less a personage than one of the numerous sons of the great Rameses II. He had known Mousa as the close friend and confidant of his father, as well as the prime minister of Egypt. He was an elder brother of Menephtah, and on the death of Rameses II. made claim to the throne of the pharaohs. But through the intrigues of the harem his claim was disallowed, and he was forced to flee the land of the Nile,—for no possible claimant to the throne of pharaoh was safe in

Egypt. He called himself Rameses III., and was burning for a chance to avenge his wrongs and to claim his own. This prince of the House of Egypt was no contemptible person. He had learned war in the school of Mousa and had had considerable experience as governor of the military province of Canaan. It was in fact his absence as governor in Canaan that contributed largely to the success of the intrigue against him. He knew that Mousa understood all this perfectly well, and he felt that there was naturally a strong bond—that of a common grievance—between the unjustly degraded prime minister of Egypt and the wrongfully excluded heir to the throne. Beside, Mousa had been his friend and tutor, and a strong feeling of sympathy had always existed between them.

All things considered, therefore, this son of Rameses felt confident that he should be able to induce Mousa to join forces with him in the conquest of Egypt. It would not only place him upon his father's throne, but would restore Mousa to his princely rank and position as prime minister: would promote the chiefs of Israel to places of high authority; and he would give the land of Goshen to be held by the Hebrews in perpetual "fee simple." They should be free to worship their own God in their own way, and to enjoy all

the rights and privileges of native Egyptians. All this the Hebrews might have in exchange for a precarious existence in a savage and barren wilderness. Moreover it would crown Mousa's long life of labor for his race with glorious success; and he could die in peace, honored and loved by all, and his body would rest forever in his own tomb.

In this manner did this prince of Egypt reason, and there certainly seemed to be everything in favor of such an alliance of the Israelites with the Amalekites; so that the wronged and desperate son of Rameses felt sure that the time had now come for a bold and determined effort to ascend the throne of his great father. He placed all these facts and considerations before the chief men of the Amalekites, and it was determined to send a messenger at once to the leader of the Israelites, asking for a conference with him.

Mousa understood well the purpose of such a conference, and saw as quick as thought the meaning and scope of an alliance between these two peoples. He saw that the advantage to himself and his race in such an alliance would be very great. He fully realized that it would at once relieve him from the vast responsibility of providing for a great host of helpless men, women, and children in a barren wild. It would take them out of the wilderness, where

drought and famine would always dog their footsteps, and restore them to the rich and fertile fields of Zoan,—to their old homes,—but not to their old condition of servitude. It would give them everything they sought. For he well knew that he should be able to dictate the terms of the alliance. And yes,—he, too, thought of the peaceful and honorable ending of his career—so dear to every son of the East; and of his proper burial in his own tomb,—for he had lived too long in Egypt to be wholly indifferent to this, to the Egyptians, the most important of all things. Everything pointed to the advantage and nothing to the disadvantage of such an alliance; and Mousa knew perfectly well that the Israelites would accept such an offer of alliance with shouts of joy and gladness—for it would restore them to their homes, where they might have peace and plenty, and enjoy the full freedom to serve their God in their own way.

Mousa knew, moreover, that such an alliance would not only be acceptable to the Israelites; he knew, that he would hardly be able to restrain them from joining with the Amalekites, whether he wished it or not. And should he, ought he to stand in their way,—to destroy in fact their only, their last chance of ever regaining their homes in Egypt,—or any homes—for he could not hope to

provide them with anything like homes in the midst of these bald mountains, nor in the land of Canaan, —at least for many generations to come.

To accept the offer of this son of Rameses meant of course war,—war with Egypt, the greatest nation in the world. But Mousa knew as no one else the elements of weakness and decay in the nation of the Nile. He knew that the throne of the pharaoh was tottering, and that it required only a vigorous assault to accomplish its fall. He had little doubt, therefore, that the combined forces of the Israelites and the Amalekites would succeed in the conquest of Egypt,—and in this way he might end his labors and the wanderings of his people seeking for a home. To refuse this alliance would not be to avoid war. War for Israel was inevitable: war with Egypt, or with all the peoples of Arabia and Syria,—especially with the powerful tribes of Canaan. But first of all, and worst of all, war with the repulsed and enraged Amalekites.

As a mere question of war, then, the invasion of Egypt was by far the less hazardous, and vastly more profitable. And the awful responsibility of his choice weighed upon him as it had never done before. Could he, dared he, reject the only visible, the only possible means of rescuing this helpless host from utter destruction? This question demanded

an immediate and final answer. The choice he now made must stand for all time and all eternity, and decide the fate of a whole race of people,—and perhaps the course of the world's history. Yes, such were the thoughts that pulsed and throbbed and seethed in the mind and heart of Mousa, son of Amram, the first prophet of God. He communed with his soul and was still.

To gain the Amalekites meant home and plenty in Egypt. But it meant, or would mean in time, the priesthood; idolatry; degradation; leprosy of soul as well as body; the loss of race and religion; of "Jehovah." Better that Israel should die in the wilderness of thirst and hunger; better that their bodies should be food for the vultures than that they should feast for a time upon the fleshpots of Egypt, and perish—as they surely would perish at last—of the leprosy of the soul. But to such an extremity Mousa was not driven. He had faith in God and a firm belief that the Israelites would eventually come to possess the land of Abraham; the land of Bethel, the first altar of God.

The Amalekite messenger was sent back at night, well guarded, that the object of his mission might not be known to the Israelites, and he was instructed to say that upon no pretence whatever would the Israelites receive again any messenger or com-

munication from the Amalekites; and that to attempt any communication would result in the instant death of the messenger. This seems a very savage way of dealing with a would-be friendly neighbor. But Mousa knew the character of these people, and the vital importance of preventing any intercourse with them. This stand he had to take at once, for to temporize would be fatal. Orders were therefore immediately given to all the tribes to put to death at once any Amalekite found within the borders of Israel. This very unfriendly, this fiercely hostile attitude of the Israelites toward these unfortunate people who had naturally looked to them for sympathy at least, if not for aid, was resented with a furious rage, and a vow of everlasting hatred was made by the Amalekites against the Israelites,—nor was it ever broken.

Mousa kept strictly his own counsels at this crisis, but gave his minister and general to understand that he might expect an attack from the Amalekites at any moment. It may not be said that the son of Nun had an actual love for war; but he was a soldier both by nature and training, and was now a general at the head of a well organized, but untried army; and he was not therefore displeased at this opportunity of testing the metal of his men and the skill of his officers. He was

nothing if not enthusiastic, and the whole army soon caught his confident spirit, and the young sons of the elders of Israel strained at the leash, eager for the onset.

But with all their hot wrath at being so rudely repulsed by this base race of slaves, the Amalekites were not recklessly precipitate, for they knew with whom they had to reckon. Mousa, the greatest master of his time in the art of war, was, it is true, well stricken in years; but the fame of Hosea, his pupil, had reached the Amalekites and inspired them with caution; and the army of Israel awaited them in vain, for they came not so long as the Israelites were encamped and prepared to resist them. They were seen, however, hovering about the camp; and a party of Israelites sent out to reconnoitre found them in strong force awaiting a favorable opportunity to give battle.

Hosea was now disposed to assume the aggressive and attack the enemy on his own ground. But Mousa, the ex-commander-in-chief of the armies of Egypt, counselled otherwise; and the host of Israel struck their tents at Elim and turned their faces once more toward the Red Sea. But they did not return by the way they had come. Their march lay by a winding road, through narrow passes which seemed at times to close in before

them and around them and block their further advance,—when suddenly the way would open, now upon a wide arid plain, and again upon a narrow, sunken rocky valley or gorge.

This was the hardest march the Israelites had experienced, but it was so skilfully and so successfully made that the Amalekites were completely mystified, and did not know whether it meant an attack or a retreat, until it was too late for them to pursue, and the children of Israel were safely encamped once more upon the friendly shore of the sea, whose waters had delivered them from the power of Egypt. The abundant springs of cool fresh water found here were a welcome relief from the hot breath of the desert. It was not however on account of these springs that the return, or retreat, had been made. Mousa knew also that here was a port and that he would be likely to find vessels in the harbor and magazines sunk on the shore from which he could procure supplies for his immediate needs. But the real purpose of this countermarch was to establish a base for his future operations. This march was a purely strategetical movement, and was so successful that Israel's communication with the Red Sea was never wholly broken till Kadesh was reached.

But no sooner did the Israelites break camp on

the seashore and march inland again, than the Amalekites appeared again hovering about their rear, watching for a good opportunity of attack. This went on for some days until Hosea had so skilfully manœuvred as to force an engagement, at a moment when the conditions were most favorable for the Israelites. This was the first time in their history that the sons of Israel struck in their own name, and for their own cause, and their enthusiasm knew no bounds. Their marvellous deliverance from the pharaoh, the total destruction of the chariots of Egypt in the waters of the Red Sea, were events fresh in their minds; and they believed that their God would fight for them now and discomfit the Amalekites as He had the Egyptians.

There was, however, an element of weakness as well as of strength in this very strong, though very crude and materialistic faith,—if faith it may be called. These two elements were never wholly separated in the mind and faith of Israel, and this caused, as we shall see, many haltings and misfortunes, and resulted at last in the evolution of the priest as opposed to the prophet. Mousa had led the way in the passage of the Red Sea in order to inspire the people with courage and trust; and being the first to gain the opposite shore he had

taken his stand upon an elevated spot and remained thus a conspicuous object until all the people had passed safely over.

The Israelites had therefore associated the idea of deliverance from Egypt with the visible presence of their great prophet-judge; and now as they were about to engage in their first battle they with one voice cried aloud to Mousa to place himself where he would be visible to all the army, that the warriors of Israel might see him and feel his blessing resting upon them in the midst of the fight. Mousa saw the danger of granting such a prayer, but felt that it would be more hazardous to refuse. He therefore took his stand where he could be seen by the warriors of Israel, and extended his hands and invoked the blessing of Jehovah upon his people. This inspirited them as nothing else could have done. And they needed every possible encouragement, for the Amalekites were no mere tribesmen, but well trained and skilful warriors, gathered together by the hand of a hard fate from all the nations of the East; and they fought with a daring born of desperation, and a determined purpose to avenge the gross insult offered them by this mean race of slaves.

Their attack was swift and fierce, and their compact column of swordsmen pierced again and again

through the line of the Israelites; but always to find themselves surrounded and forced to fight their way out. This was repeated all along Israel's line, many times during the day, and the battle went now with the Amalekites and now with the Israelites. But so long as the warriors of Israel could see their aged prophet in the act of blessing them they fought with assured determination, until the going down of the sun. And Amaleke was discomfited with the edge of their swords.

The importance of this first battle and victory was beyond human reckoning. The Amalekites were the most warlike and the most dreaded of all the peoples of the wilderness, and their defeat in a conflict of their own choosing, by a race of Egyptian slaves fresh from the pastoral fields of Zoan, and the lash of the taskmaster, made a profound impression upon all the tribes of Arabia; and upon the powerful nations on the Euphrates and the Orontes, as well as the people inhabitating the land of Canaan, and the regions bordering on the great sea. The Israelites were no longer a contemptible race of slaves, but on the contrary one of the most powerful, war-like and to-be-dreaded forces in Arabia. All of these peoples knew that sooner or later they would have to try conclusions with them.

The first evidence of the respect that Hosea's great victory had gained for the name of Israel was shown by the visit of Reuel or Jethro, Mousa's father-in-law. He was a great sheik and the priest of the Midianites, one of the largest tribes in the Sinai peninsula and all Arabia Petrea. That this Arab chief was a man of much worldly wisdom is clearly revealed by his course toward his son-in-law. Mousa had lived with him and rendered obedience to his authority for many years. But at last God spake to him in a blaze of light and reminded him of his mission to his people in Egypt and he determined to return to the land of the Nile. He did not, however, explain his mission to his father-in-law, but merely said, "Let me go, I pray thee, and return to my brethren which are in Egypt, and see whether they be yet alive."

We see in this a mixture of the diplomacy of the oriental, and the spirit of the prophet of God. The oriental will deceive with such a perfect appearance of real consciousness of innocency as to deceive every one, himself included.

This innocent and truly laudable request was readily granted, as it was no unusual thing for the tribesmen of Arabia to visit the great nation of the Nile. That Mousa only meant to visit his unfortunate kinsmen and return again was proven to the

satisfaction of Jethro by his not asking for a settlement with him, and by his leaving all his property behind. It was but natural that he should take his wife and his sons with him, that they might know and be known of his kinsmen, and also that they might see something of the greatness of Egypt. But when the great sheik of Midian heard of his son-in-law's wild notion of freeing the Hebrews from Egyptian bondage and bringing them to Arabia Petrea, he sent a messenger to him asking, demanding the return of his daughter and her sons to their own tribe and people.

This was no unreasonable demand, as a daughter of an Arab chief did not sever her allegiance to her race and to her tribe by marriage; but was subject to her father so long as she lived; and Reuel was both father and chief to Zipporah. Mousa complied with this demand of his unsympathetic father-in-law without complaint, and for good reasons of his own. He had no time to devote to the care of his family, and he did not wish them to be subject to all the possible hardships of the exodus. They could not speak the language either of Egypt or Israel and their position at the best would therefore be a very unhappy one. So Zipporah and her two sons had been placed upon the backs of the camels that Jethro had sent, and had thus returned to the

land of Midian before the Israelites began their exodus from the valley of the Nile.

Mousa therefore felt that he was consulting the best interests of his family in complying with Jethro's request. But he was also prompted to this action by another and a stronger motive—the desire to keep on the most friendly terms with this great sheik of Midian, who would be one of his nearest and most powerful neighbors. Jethro heard of course of Israel's marvellous passage of the Red Sea and the total destruction of the army of Pharaoh. But he regarded those events, astounding as they certainly were, as the tokens of the anger of the gods of the Nile against the Egyptians, rather than an evidence of the power of the God of Israel. He did not therefore think it prudent to renew his family relations with the victorious leader of Israel through the bed of the sea. His mighty host would have to be fed, and this shrewd nomad sheik saw clearly enough the embarrassments that might arise from an entangling alliance with these freedmen from the Nile. He kept at home therefore and watched the progress of events, noting every movement of Israel, knowing that sooner or later some tribe or other would fall upon them, and prove either their weakness or their strength in battle. And now

that they had been tried and proved,—now that they had repulsed and utterly routed the most powerful tribe in Arabia, Jethro felt a great respect for them and great admiration and affection for their leader, the husband of his favorite daughter. So he summoned his daughter and conducted her and her sons to the camp of Israel and the tent of the mighty Mousa, the deliverer of his race, and the prophet of the only true God.

This wily nomad sheik was, as we can plainly see, a prudent man of the world, and his ways have been and will always be the ways of the world, whether in tent or town. Mousa knew the ways of the world and did not upbraid his astute father-in-law for his cautious course, but received him affectionately and with great show of outward respect; and an alliance, offensive and defensive, was easily effected between Israel and Midian for their mutual advantage. The singing of the little bird was again heard in Mousa's tent and its melody filled his heart, and this prophet of God rested from his labors for a space and gave himself up to the sweetest of all human joys—the love of wife and children.

The young warriors of Israel had now shown themselves able to cope with the strongest foe to be found in the wilderness. Israel had fought on her own account for the first time in her whole history

and had gained a glorious victory. This was certainly an occasion of great rejoicing, and one to be remembered by their children for all time to come. Mousa wrote it down as a memorial and rehearsed it in the ears of the people, how that Amalek, of all the tribes of the wilderness, was the first to fight against Israel in the hour of his distress; and that there should never be peace, but perpetual hatred and war between Israel and Amalek from generation to generation.

This great victory, as every other blessing, was ascribed to the right arm of Jehovah, and the people bowed before the altars of their God with a buoyant spirit and a confident faith.

CHAPTER XV

THE THEOCRACY AND THE ELECT PEOPLE

Israel had now been tried and proved as by water and fire, and was "a peculiar treasure," "an holy nation," "the elect" of Jehovah "above all people." But what did this election mean? Let us see. A father's constant desire is to reveal himself, that is to make known his parent's heart to his children. But he must do this through the natural, the necessary channels of his paternal character. To attempt to force this revelation through arbitrary conditions or relations would be fatal. He is equally a father to all his children. But there comes a time, may be, when one of his sons by some act or thought of his own identifies himself with his father as no other child has ever done; and in this act of identification, this act of confidence, this act of faith, he receives a fuller revelation of his father's nature and purpose than is or can be vouchsafed to his brothers or sisters; for by this voluntary act of identifying himself with his father, he opens the channels of communion with him, and through this communion comes the

revelation. He is now his father's "peculiar treasure," his "favorite," his "elect" son.

The race of Israel, by clinging to the idea of one God, and to the conviction that righteousness was His essential character, separated itself from all other nations of the world, and identified itself with God. It was by turning away from the priest and all his abominations in the land of Egypt, and trusting in God that Israel became His "peculiar treasure," His "holy nation," His "elect above all people." The terms of this election were not therefore arbitrary laws, but necessary conditions to a communion with God; and revelation can only come through communion. Moreover we shall see that this election held just so long as Israel complied with these necessary conditions of communion, and no longer.

This is the one capital truth of the history of Israel, as the elect of God; and this is the key to all revelation. Without communion there can be no identification: and without identification there can be no revelation and no election. But Israel's faith in the righteousness and paternal character of God was of very slow growth, and had to be fostered, as Mousa knew, by implicit obedience to the stern laws of "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not." These are the simplest and the most uni-

versal terms of all government,—and the father above all things else must govern—for government is the chief function of his nature.

All government aims in the first instance to produce the assured conviction that whatever is promised or threatened will be performed. This conviction is inseparable from authority, and this authority had now been established in the mind of Israel. The Israelites first of all then believed that Jehovah would perform whatever He promised or threatened. This was the first condition of faith; but it was not faith,—for faith is always identification through communion. But the real faith of Israel as a whole people was shown when they turned away from the "fleshpots of Egypt"—from the priest and his abominations—and braved the exodus and the unknown dangers of the wilderness in the assured conviction that Jehovah was a righteous God.

The exodus of Israel was therefore in some measure at least the act of identifying a people with righteousness, and with the God of righteousness. This was an act of genuine faith; the same faith that caused their father Abraham to leave his home in Ur of the Chaldees and go out he knew not where, at the call of God. Abraham turned away from the luxury, idolatry, and priestly abominations

of Babylon, and faced the privations and perils of a strange land, and by so doing identified himself with God and became the "elect" son.

The revolt of Israel from Egypt was therefore the second exodus of the race from idolatry and uncleanness. But notwithstanding the long interval between the first and second steps in the advance of this pure faith—the faith of God as a righteous father—the children of this faith were still very young and very weak, and unquestioning obedience to the paternal government was necessary. The theocracy of Israel was therefore a form of government embodying the highest moral and religious consciousness of the people. It was a Democracy as well as a Theocracy. It was in fact the only true Democracy—for "Demos" without "Theos" is always "Chaos." It was the most human, and hence the most divine of all ancient forms of government. Through it, and by reason of it, the Hebrews, a wild tribe of Arabs, became the most powerful people of their time; and one born of their race is to-day the vital force of all forms of civilized government.

There never was, there never can be, a strong race or nation without some form of Theocracy. For religion must govern in order to live. By religion is not meant however the theories or

dogmas of priest or pope, but the direct contrary. Religion is the most permanent and universal human motive, and cannot be ignored in any form of government without fatal consequences. Religion is not a formless, nerveless sentiment. It is first and always a form of government, a rule of conduct; founded upon the consciousness that man is ever in the presence of an Infinite and Eternal Energy, from which all things proceed.

Philosophize as we may, to this conclusion we shall come at last. We may call this "Eternal Energy," Jehovah, God, Father, or the "Power not ourselves that makes for righteousness." But by whatever name we call it, the fact remains the same, and is always present. We are in the hands of an Almighty, an all-righteous power, and must to some measure identify ourselves with that power in order to know its character. This is necessary to our peace and happiness. Philosophy and science have come in their last analyses to the apprehension of the truth of this Infinite and Eternal Energy,—a truth which the simple-minded Israelites saw, and identified themselves with in the wilderness of Sinai.

The Theocracy of Israel was the first national or tribal government that identified humanity with divinity. This was no mere theoretical identifica-

tion, through the priest or his dogma; but the practical and actual identification of a whole nation, through faith and conduct, with God. Israel was by this identification "hewn from the rock" and made a holy nation of priests needing no intermediary. Mousa knew that the most effective way, the only way in fact, to abolish the intermediary office of priest was to proclaim Israel a nation of priests. He thus brought the people face to face with God, and they could not hide their acts or even their thoughts behind any screen of priest or ritual. It was this, this consciousness of God's immediate presence, that kept the Israelites simple and pure—the purest nation the world has ever known—and Divinity can only dwell with purity.

CHAPTER XVI

THE TEN WORDS FROM SINAI

THE Hebrews were now in the very midst of the wilderness, far removed from the seacoast. In this long march they had ascended more than four thousand feet above the sea level, and their tents were now pitched in the plain of "Er Rahah"—a vast chamber hewn by the hand of nature out of the very heart of the bald mountains. The walls of this chamber were of naked granite, and the deep blue of heaven was its covering.

The weary and homeless children of Israel approached this natural temple of Jehovah from the north, through a winding and ascending passage that led to the doorway, through which the host of Israel suddenly beheld the rose-colored pinnacles of the huge cathedral glistening in the bright sunlight and towering aloft two thousand feet above them. Not a vestige of human habitation nor the slightest token of the craft of man was to be seen. The great floor of this temple was covered with green, and gentle streams of pure water trickled down its smooth walls and murmured among the grass and

shrubs. The cluster of lofty pinnacles sprang from one base. This base formed the south end of the cathedral, and was lifted above the vast audience chamber by two shelving ledges,—the first perhaps one hundred, and the second three hundred feet above the level of the floor. These shelves, or natural tables, were of pink and purple granite, barren of tree or shrub, and shone as if they had been polished by the hand of a mighty artificer.

The beauty and grandeur of this sequestered spot were well known to Mousa and it had been chosen by him before he left the plains of Midian, as the scene for the proclamation of "Ten Words of Righteousness" to the house of Israel. And never was a system of government given to a nation with such simple, albeit, such awful solemnity as were the "Ten Words of the Law" proclaimed from this mount of God to the children of Israel by their prophet Mousa.

Four weeks were spent in preparing the people for this ratification of their solemn covenant with God; and when all things were ready Mousa took up his position upon the lower ledge of the mountain, and, with the elders of Israel standing bared below, proclaimed the law of God to man: and at every word the elders responded, vowing obedience for themselves and their tribes. Only a small por-

tion of the vast host of Israel were able to hear the voice of their prophet-judge, as he uttered the words of God; but as each commandment was pronounced, and at a given signal, all the tribes of Israel joined in a mighty amen, that sounded out through the silent wilderness like the voice of many waters.

But that nothing should be wanting to complete the solemn and awful impression of the scene, a terrific thunderstorm—such as can be seen only in this region—broke over the heads of the bowed multitude, and the seal of Jehovah was given to His covenant with Israel amid the blinding flashes of lightning and the deafening peals of thunder. Every bolt as it burst with the roar of a hundred cannon awakened echo after echo among the lofty peaks, until the whole mountain range of Sinai caught up and repeated in the trumpet voice of the storm the solemn vow of Israel to keep the "Ten Words of Righteousness." These appalling phenomena of nature—the emblems of purity and might—were a most fitting accompaniment to the awful solemnity of the occasion.

Safe in this lofty temple of God, far away from the contagious corruption of man, and especially of the priest, the Israelites stood face to face with nature and with God. There was nothing that

tempted the senses; nothing that invited to ease and luxury and impurity. All was peace and all was pure, for peace and purity are the twin daughters of God, and can never dwell apart.

It would seem that after ratifying such a compact with Jehovah, amid such circumstances of grandeur and awe, the children of Israel would need little or nothing more to keep them faithful to their vows. But Mousa knew the world and the human heart too well to trust to the impressions of any occasion or circumstance, however solemn. The Hebrews were still the "Children of Israel" in a very literal sense—as the sequel too clearly proves,—and needed the constant authority and untiring patience of their sublime leader to hold them together and keep them from lapsing into idolatry and all manner of uncleanness. Their isolated position in the midst of the wilderness, apart from the degrading influences of Egypt and Babylon, was to be sure favorable to a life of righteousness. But the constant propinquity of men, women, and children made necessary by the circumstances of their wandering life was a serious menace to decency if not to purity, and required the strict enforcement of stern rules of conduct. These rules of life were simple and plain, and went straight to the mark.

And first of all—and as Mousa very well knew—most important of all—was the prohibition of idolatry. Not only this but there must be no approach to idolatry through symbolism. All images therefore of earth and sky, of the stars in the heavens or fish in the sea or creatures on the dry land must be forever abolished from the worship of God. This was the necessary condition of all that would follow. All forms of idolatry must be at once abandoned before any thought of the law of purity and righteousness could be entertained. A personal God only could enforce a personal law of righteousness, and consciousness is necessary to personality. This abolished at one stroke both idolatry and polytheism, and with them all symbolism, for idolatry is impossible without symbolism—and symbolism always and everywhere leads to some form of idolatry and impurity.

The altar at Sinai was therefore modelled upon the altar at Bethel, and was without image or symbol. We see in all this how Mousa like Abraham was careful that no impurity should creep into the worship of God under the disguise of symbolism. The command not to take God's name in vain is a repetition in a different form of the second word, and means that the name of God must not be given to any image or symbol. The reiteration of this

command denouncing all forms of idolatry and imagery, in three out of the ten words, proves clearly enough the importance of this first step in the road to righteousness. Mousa knew too well that beneath the surface of Israel's conscious life and thought there still lurked the image of Moloch, the moon god of Babylon and Ur of the Chaldees, who had been worshipped in Haran under the form of an ox by Terah, the father of Abraham. This form of idolatry was very similar to the worship of Apis, the bull god of Memphis, and Mnevis, the calf god at On, and had cropped out more than once among the Israelites during their sojourn in the land of Goshen. Mousa feared therefore that this form of idolatry was not yet dead, but only sleeping.

And that his fears were well grounded, alas! too soon appears. The command setting apart one day in seven was a return to a custom older than Abraham. Tradition carried it back beyond Abraham and Mesopotamia and Babylon to the first dawn of the religious consciousness. If the soul of man be in truth a reality; if it is something more than a mere ignis-fatuus, a will-o'-the-wisp, it must have some time it can call its own. The bodily senses are always active, always clamoring for pleasure, for luxury, for license; and the soul must have a

season of its own when it may commune with itself and its God and be still. This is the first condition of its life and health. All spiritually minded, or even serious minded, men and women in all times have felt this. The command to keep one day in seven was not therefore an arbitrary law, but an essential condition of spiritual life, upon which all the following commandments rested, and from which they drew their vital breath.

Having now laid wide and deep the foundations of the "Theocracy"—the Law of Righteousness—in the innermost soul of Israel, the great lawgiver proceeds to pronounce the statutes governing and regulating the practical conduct of life. We observe therefore that no practical conduct is so much as hinted at before the foundation principle upon which that conduct rests and must rest, is proclaimed and expounded. And next to God and our own souls—for the two thoughts are born and brought up together—come the laws governing the relation of fathers and mothers to their sons and daughters. These relations must be safeguarded at once, else all attempt at right conduct will be futile. To neglect the honor, the duty, the love we owe to our parents is to violate at the very beginning of our lives the sacred relations of the family upon which all human society is founded.

There was practical need of this law, for in Egypt and other nations it was not an uncommon thing for children to put their aged or helpless parents to death. But this was not merely a local or temporary law to prevent cruelty to parents. It was a law establishing the honor and authority of the father and mother, and ennobling the family relations for all time to come, as the true symbol of all human law and order. Having thus proclaimed in the first five words a righteous God as the supreme lawgiver of the universe, and the father and mother as the type of all earthly honor and authority, Mousa gives in the briefest and most positive manner the general and necessary laws regulating the conduct of man toward his neighbors and the world at large:

> Thou shalt not kill.
> Thou shalt not commit adultery.
> Thou shalt not steal.
> Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

These simple and direct rules, so quickly stated and so easily understood, cover almost wholly the overt relations of society. There is no room for quibble, no room for casuistry or priestcraft here, and whenever these laws are kept man's conduct is marked by moral health and spiritual strength. There can be no room for metaphysical theorizing, dogmatism or ritual here, for the vital rules of con-

duct are so plain that one who runs may read. No subtleties of priest, no power, even of God Himself, can absolve man from the habitual violation of these natural and sacred relations of mankind.

But the last word goes beneath the surface of things and pierces like an arrow to the heart and core of the soul—

> Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house:
> thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife:
> nor his manservant, nor his maidservant,
> nor his ox, nor his ass, *nor anything that is his.*

For after all it is what the heart covets, and not what we actually do, that gives the color and character to our lives. Such then are the "Ten Words of Righteousness" as they were proclaimed by the prophet and lawgiver Mousa from Sinai, the holy Mount of God. It was from Mount Sinai and not from the Seven Hills of Rome that the true principles of all stable government emanated. The "Ten Words" of the son of Amram contain the essence of all just and hence of all strong government. The Theocracy of Israel was neither a system of priestcraft nor kingcraft. It was a government founded upon the natural, the divine law that righteousness exalteth a nation. This is the first and last lesson in the science of all government. "Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in."

CHAPTER XVII

THE LAPSE

AARON was the eldest son of Amram and succeeded to the headship of the tribe of Levi whilst his brother was still prime minister of Egypt; and during Mousa's long absence in the land of Midian Aaron became the chief man among the Hebrews. When therefore Mousa returned to Goshen with his Midianitish wife and children, and assumed the headship of all Israel, Aaron and his strong-minded and ambitious sister Miriam,—both older than Mousa—resented what they considered this usurpation on the part of their younger brother and his heathenish wife. Mousa determined however to have peace with his own family at any cost short of the defeat of his mission, and a compromise was brought about, in which it was agreed that Zipporah and her children should be sent back to her father in the land of Midian; and that Aaron should be associated with Mousa on equal terms in the leadership of Israel. The return of Zipporah to her father was, as we have seen, not wholly unpleasing to Mousa, both on the ground of policy

and natural affection, as it relieved his beloved not only from the resentment and jealousy of his brother and sister, but also from the trying circumstances of a strange tongue and a strange people,—not to mention the severe hardships of the exodus. The granting to Aaron of equal authority in the work of the deliverance of Israel was therefore in no way displeasing to Mousa, so long as it did not hinder the work nor seriously interfere with the plans and policy which Mousa had matured so carefully, with a full personal knowledge of all the conditions involved.

But Aaron was an old man, without any special call to this work, and was naturally not disposed to undertake the responsibility of such a vast enterprise as the transplanting of a whole nation from the richest land in the world to an uninhabited wilderness. He had once favored the exodus but he now contended that he and Mousa might be able to make such terms with the new and rather friendly disposed pharaoh as would enable the Israelites to remain in Goshen without being subjected to hard servitude, and with the freedom to worship their own God in their own way. But Mousa knew better. He knew that at best such an arrangement could only be a temporary makeshift; he therefore would not,—and feeling the

divine character of his commission, he could not—consent to any terms that would not include the complete separation of Israel from Egypt. Upon this Mousa took a firm stand and his brother was forced to consent to what seemed to him a hopeless and mad project.

This first step being agreed upon and settled once for all, the brothers acted cordially together in everything, but especially in their repeated and persistent petitions to the pharaoh to let their people go into the wilderness to worship their God. But the royal consent had no sooner been given and the march begun, than there was a more serious disagreement and a final rupture between Mousa and Aaron.

One thing Mousa had settled in his mind from the first, namely, that the exodus should not follow the great highway from Egypt to Canaan, but should be made by way of the Red Sea. This he felt to be absolutely essential to any hope of success; and for this he had been prepared by the circumstances of his long experience as prime minister of Egypt, and by the special study of the laws governing the winds, the tides, and all the physical conditions involved. But nothing could convince his brother of the reasonableness, or even sanity of such a course. Aaron actually believed that Mousa

was insane, and announced to the people that he would not be responsible in any degree for the consequences of such a rash movement. This open declaration of Aaron repudiating the plans of Mousa might have, and would have, produced a serious revolt from the authority and leadership of Mousa but for the very quick and very effective support that Hosea rendered him at this crisis.

The military organization was still in a tentative state, but it had progressed so far that each tribe had a picked band of young warriors with an able captain at their head, who had been appointed by Hosea. These bands were, as we have seen, complete and distinct in themselves; but they were at the same time subordinate to and derived their life and force from the whole military body, of which the son of Nun was the heart and head. His prompt action quelled the revolt, and made him at once the natural and official prime minister of Mousa, who now stood alone as the responsible head of all Israel.

The successful passage of the Red Sea, and the marvellous circumstances which attended it, following immediately upon this revolt, established Mousa's authority and leadership beyond all further question. Aaron had now lost forever his influence and power as a political guide. He

and his sister Miriam were greatly impressed by the miraculous deliverance of Israel, and believed that their brother had been given divine power. All jealousy was for the time hushed, and they joined with the mighty host in singing Mousa's hymn of victory.

A reconciliation between the brothers took place, but the children of Israel from henceforth look to the younger brother alone as their prophet and redeemer, and to him alone do they cry in their moments of hunger and distress. He is not only their leader and prophet but their special providence. Not once again is heard the expression, "God spake to Mousa and Aaron," which words or their equivalents were so familiar before the Israelites left the fields of Zoan. Nor do the people, save once, murmur against "Mousa and Aaron," but always against Mousa as the sole responsible person. It is true that Mousa takes Aaron with him at the battle of Rephidim, but nothing can keep him long at his side, and he naturally and inevitably falls away from all authority and influence and power in the leadership and councils of his people; and Hosea as naturally and inevitably takes his place at Mousa's side according to the eternal law of the fitness of things. Aaron therefore sees the younger brother the actual head of the whole nation of

Israel, honored and almost worshipped as the successor of Joseph and Jacob and Abraham. To his younger brother the people look for everything as to a god; whilst he, the natural and rightful heir of this noble succession of chiefs and patriarchs of Israel, is passed by without any show of honor or even respect.

It is quite impossible for the European or American to realize in any degree the feelings of authority and dignity that swell in the breast of the first-born son of an Arab chieftain. What then must have been the pride of an Israelite when to the great dignity of chieftain is added the succession of the kingship of Israel? And to have been supplanted in this dignity and honor, from whatever cause, by a younger brother was the greatest indignity and disgrace he could possibly suffer. This will indicate Aaron's feelings of disappointment and degradation, and will explain his bitter resentment against his brother, and Hosea, his prime minister and favorite. This resentment found expression whenever the children of Israel hungered, or thirsted, or suffered any special distress from their wandering life in the wilderness.

At such times Aaron and Miriam would go about from tent to tent among the people, pitying them and lamenting their hard fate in the barren desert,

when they might have been enjoying peace and plenty in the rich fields of Zoan. The people were wont at such times of keen sorrow to give ear to these plaints; and Aaron began to recover by stealth what he had lost by his open revolt. But his returning influence and power was of a private priestly nature, and not of a prophetic or political character.

During their long residence in Egypt, the Hebrews as a whole had been faithful to Jehovah, as the God of their father Abraham. But they had been much hindered and at last prohibited from performing this worship. And when they were able to give public expression to their faith in Jehovah, their worship was not always free from the forms of idolatry. This came about in two ways: first from the fact that the ox (an image sacred to Moloch) was the similitude under which many of them believed that Abraham worshipped Jehovah; and second from the fact that they could often perform this worship without giving offence to the Egyptians, as both at Memphis and Heliopolis the image of an ox or calf (Apis and Mnevis) were worshipped. The similarity of these images often indeed misled the Egyptians, and the Hebrews were thus permitted to worship (?) Jehovah under the image of an ox or a calf.

In outward form, therefore, the worship of Moloch bore a strong resemblance to that of Apis or Mnevis. There was of course a very real and essential difference between the Egyptian and Hebrew form of idolatry: for the one rested upon polytheism, the other upon monotheism. Still, in spite of their very long sojourn in Egypt, the elders and leaders of Israel had in a most marvellous manner kept themselves free from any semblance of idolatry. But the fact remained that the image of an ox or a calf was a very familiar object of worship to all the Hebrews, and was associated in their memory with the rich fields of Zoan, where to be sure they had suffered many and severe hardships, but where food enough was always certain, and where they had enjoyed many seasons of peace and plenty. And as they dwelt thus upon the past, distance softened the hard circumstances of their servitude and heightened their joys, until the land of Goshen, which they had known, seemed better sometimes than the land of Canaan, which they had not seen and might never enjoy.

That these thoughts should often have presented themselves to the people of Israel during their long and weary wanderings through the wilderness, when famine and thirst threatened to consume them, is certainly not surprising. But that these memories

should have caused them to lapse into idolatry in the rich and well-watered plain of "Er Rahah," at the very foot of the holy mount, whence they had just received the Ten Words of Righteousness by the mouth of their prophet Mousa, together with such sublime tokens of God's presence, is, to say the least, not what we should have expected.

But the unexpected happened, as it so often does. Aaron and Miriam had had little or no lot in the organization of the "Theocracy," or in the proclamation of the law. Mousa and his prime minister, Hosea, had planned and carried forward everything without consulting the chiefs or elders of Israel, and they had now withdrawn themselves from the camp and the people in lofty and mysterious seclusion. They had, it is true, left Aaron and Hur in nominal authority, but more as the "care-takers" than the lawgivers or rulers of the people. At any rate it is perfectly clear that Mousa and Hosea had not taken Aaron into their confidence, and their long absence,—and as Aaron and Hur doubtless supposed, their death—caused a complete breakdown of the newly-established Theocratic form of government. This was not so surprising. The people had come to look to Mousa personally for everything, and his daily and visible presence in the camp had become necessary to give the children of Israel assurance

that their aged prophet was still alive and able to protect and lead them. Mousa had in truth become the embodiment, the personification of all law and authority, and was regarded by the people as little, if any, less than Jehovah Himself,—so powerfully had the miraculous crossing of the sea, and the other events of the exodus wrought upon the imagination of this homeless multitude. The sublime, the awful circumstances attending the proclamation of the law from Sinai had deepened the impressions of the great body of Israelites into a profound conviction that Mousa was no less than "Jehovah."

In his absence, therefore, his whole plan of law and worship was without force or meaning, and fell apart. It was Demos without Theos, and quickly resulted in Chaos. Their God had departed from them, and they must substitute some image in place of His bodily presence. In this state of helpless anarchy it was natural that the more thoughtful of the Israelites should turn to Aaron, the elder brother of their deified leader. But Aaron had lost all authority and power as a prophet or political leader, and could in no sense take the place of his brother as a lawgiver and ruler. But he was Mousa's brother, and therefore in the minds of the people partook somewhat of his divine nature.

It was not, however, his leadership, but his sanction and coöperation that the people desired. And this he was at first forced to give, but having once given it he sought by the excess of his newborn zeal to become in some sense the head, if not the leader of his nation. Having failed as a political prophet and statesman, he now resorts to the arts of the priest. In this he showed considerable astuteness, for the name and office of priest were linked in the minds of the people with idolatry. They therefore hailed him as their high priest, and demanded a symbol or image through which they might render worship to Jehovah. This was granted them, and the familiar image of a golden calf was soon enthroned in the camp of the Israelites, and made the object of their worship. This violation of the reiterated command against idolatry was swiftly followed by an utter lapse of Israel from all sense of decency and chastity. "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." So woeful, indeed, was the fall of this whole nation, that Aaron, their high priest, made them naked that they might perform an acceptable dance before their idol.

We see here as everywhere that no sooner was the authority of the priest introduced into the body politic, than idolatry and unchastity, his invariable attendants, quickly follow. This was by far the

greatest crisis that ever confronted the faith and character of Israel. Nor did the Israelites ever fully recover themselves. The particular thing that Mousa had endeavored to keep out had now entered into their national life and character, never to be completely rooted out. The sight of the golden calf and the lascivious orgies performed in its honor completely upset Mousa for the moment, and in his great disappointment he lost all hope and all faith, and not only cursed the people but blasphemed Jehovah.

So awful indeed was the demoralizing work of the priest in this far plain of "Er Rahah" that he came near to defeating entirely and forever the law of righteousness as it had been proclaimed by Mousa from the Mount of God. And from the day of that priestly innovation until now the struggle between the true prophets of God and the machinations of the priest has gone on, and it seems must go on to the end of time, for evil will be with us forever contending with the good. Of course the priest is not always nor perhaps generally conscious that he is making for idolatry and all manner of uncleanness. But however sincere, he can never have a strong and healthy influence on society. There have always been strong men among the priests and ritualists of the world, but they were

strong in the inverse ratio of their sincerity. No sincere ritualist was ever a strong-minded, healthy-bodied man. Nor can he ever be, for he is in violation of a true manly nature, as well as the laws of God.

The small tribe of Levi to which Mousa himself belonged had not been infected by this contagion of idolatry. This was very gratifying to Mousa, for it proved that his own immediate kinsfolk stood firm in the true faith in spite of the apostasy of Aaron, their chief. They were not only proof against these spiritual lepers, but they stood armed and ready to defend their honor and their faith against the whole multitude of these weak and unchaste idolaters. The brave and manly attitude of his own tribe caught the eye of the great warrior at once, and he saw that in this small band lay the only hope of Israel's recovery from its sudden and woeful fall. Mousa knew that first of all the Israelites must be made to understand that what God promised or threatened He would fulfil. Quick as thought therefore he raised the shout, "Who is on the Lord's side? let him come unto me! And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him."

There was no time now for parley nor persuasion: action, quick and effectual, was the only thing

to be thought of—the only thing that could be of any possible avail. And this small band of clean-minded, clean-bodied men with Hosea as their head went in and out among the naked and unclean idolaters with sword in hand until all the leaders of this rebellion, save Aaron, were slain. The slaughter was awful, for it was brother against brother and father against son. But awful as it was nothing else could have quelled the rebellion, destroyed the idolatry, and reëstablished at once the "Theocracy" and the laws of righteousness.

But this sudden rebellion and lapse of Israel into the grossest forms of idolatry revealed to Mousa the unwisdom of his course in not taking the elders, and especially his elder brother, into his counsels and confidence. It also convinced him that a people, a nation could not be formed by mere abstract law. They must have symbols upon which to fix their sentiments. The priest knows this to be a universal fact of human nature, and he practises upon it for his own purposes. After and not until order had been fully restored Mousa called a council of the chiefs and elders of Israel to deliberate upon the laws and statutes for the government of the Hebrew nation. This resulted in a separation of church and state, and the whole tribe of Levi, with Aaron the chief at their head, was set apart as the

guardians of the true faith and the custodians of the means of worship.

If there had to be (as there had) a picked body of men to look after the pure worship of Jehovah, nothing could have been more fitting than the setting apart of the tribe of Levi for this important work, for it had shown itself pure and strong when all the other tribes had fallen into idolatry and unchastity. But why should the weak, crafty and unclean Aaron be placed at its head? Because he was the brother of Mousa, and the chief of the tribe, and these things could not be ignored. Besides he was now very old and must soon give way to a better man. Moreover, he had been given a lesson by his brother that ought to have cured him of any tendency to idolatry and rebellion. But humiliating as had been his recent experiences in leadership he was not yet disposed to accept without question the absolute headship of his younger brother. He therefore sought to magnify by all possible means of outward show and circumstance his office of "high priest of Israel," —for such he persisted in having it called—and he and his sons were accordingly arrayed in the richest and most gorgeous apparel that could be procured, —the breastplate of Aaron's robe being an exact reproduction of that of the high priest of Egypt.

Mousa lamented this innovation of the priest with his robes and ritual into the simple life of Israel, but it seemed inevitable, and he felt sure that the tribe of Levi would protect the people from overt idolatry. The church and the state being now separated, Aaron was no longer a member of the council of seventy. And this was some compensation to Mousa for his brother's priestly dress and airs. Mousa was still the statesman and prophet and Israel was governed by the prophet and not by the priest.

CHAPTER XVIII

SELF-ABANDONMENT

When Mousa returned to the camp of Israel from the mount where he had communed alone with God, and beheld the people performing a naked dance before an idol of their own creation, the shock was so great that he lost all hope, threw down the table containing the Law of Righteousness, and threw up his commission as the lawgiver and prophet of Israel. He saw at once that the Israelites had lost their character as the elect people of God—for the essential condition of their election was identification with Jehovah as the God of Righteousness. What was now the possible and the only thing for him to do was to punish the leaders of this revolt and restore order in the camp. This he did in a most effective, and—as we should say—savage manner. He was no longer the prophet, but the merciless warrior and absolute ruler. He would not plead nor reason with these weak and unclean idolaters. They must decide at once whether they were on the Lord's side or not. And the swords of the Levites spared neither young

nor old of those who did not declare for Jehovah. This was a harsh, a cruel, a savage,—but a necessary—retribution; for Mousa first of all had to prove to the people that he was not only a prophet but a lawgiver and ruler who could punish as well as reward.

But having punished the idolaters, restored order, and established his authority once more, Mousa's just anger was more than appeased and his heart began to fill with pity and compassion for these people, who had left their homes in Egypt and followed him into this strange wilderness. They had sinned grievously, it was true. But human nature was very weak at the best. And Mousa remembered with shame and humiliation his own hours of weakness and relapse, even after he had heard the voice of God speaking to him in a blaze of light and commanding him to deliver his people. Yes, Mousa remembered his own lapse into indifference, irreligion, and idolatry; and he believed that but for the direct intervention of Jehovah he might even now be a priest in Egypt bowing before the altars of idolatry and impurity. And as he thought thus of his own weakness he experienced a keen feeling of remorse for the cruel punishment he had administered, as well as pity for the weakness of this vast multitude of homeless men, women, and children in

the midst of this strange wilderness. So strong became these mingled feelings of pity and remorse in his great soul for the "Children of Israel"—children now in a sense he had never before realized—that this "Son of Amram" was ready and willing to offer himself up as a vicarious sacrifice to Jehovah for the sins of his people. And in the anguish of his soul he exclaimed, "Yet now if Thou wilt forgive their sin ——" And here the sentence is broken and a pause—how long we know not—ensues, and then these wonderful words of utter self-renunciation are uttered,—"and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written!"

As by the discovery of a single inarticulate bone the student of comparative anatomy is able to infer the whole articulate and unknown structure, so if we had nothing else than this one incompetent and disjointed sentence we should be able—from this single bone—to reconstruct the whole body, the whole life and character of the son of Amram, and *a fortiori* the life of Israel.

These broken words of grief and pity, of remorse and utter self-abnegation, have upon them the indelible stamp of genuineness. No writer could have invented such words, for they reveal a condition of the soul, a state of agony and remorse, of

disinterested love and self-abandonment past all simulation. This broken sentence of the son of Amram is then the keystone of the arch of Hebrew thought and feeling. It cannot be taken out without pulling down the whole structure of Israel; nor could it ever have been forced into a structure already built. It explains all that has gone before in the history of Mousa and Israel; and it interprets and illuminates with the light of eternal love all that is to come, until we see the Son of Mary, of the tribe of Judah, nailed to the cross by the elders of Israel, and hear Him utter almost the same words of pity and love, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!" It is thus we see in the son of Amram the true forerunner and prophet of the Son of God.

The lapse of Israel revealed to Mousa a degree of weakness in human nature of which he had not dreamed, notwithstanding his long and varied experience amongst all sorts and conditions of people. It was well for him, and especially for his mission that this awful revelation of human weakness did not come to him earlier in his work of deliverance; otherwise he never could have hoped to succeed. He now saw that the remainder of his work must be done on a different, and alas! a lower plane. He saw that he must give up his sublime ideals of

a "Theocracy,"—of a government founded on identification with Jehovah as the God of Righteousness, and accept the rule of the priest. He now saw that the people, the great mass of the people, could not grasp the thought of a purely spiritual, immaterial God of Righteousness. They must have something sensual, something material to engage the eye and ear and other bodily senses —must in a word have some symbol to bring God within the limits of their imagination and comprehension. They must also have some one to interpret this symbol, some intermediary to help them in their approach to Jehovah.

But this meant the priest—the very thing Mousa had endeavored above all things else to exclude from the worship of Israel. And the son of Amram was now forced to the conclusion that the priesthood understood humanity—at least its weaknesses—better than he. The priest was in fact the result and perpetual evidence of this weakness in human nature, and he therefore very naturally practised upon it for his own benefit. He had been ever present, and always the most potent factor in all the religions of the world, save Israel, and his absence from the Hebrew religion had kept Israel simple and pure in its worship of a God of Righteousness. It was this simple and unpriestly faith

of Israel that had at first attracted and encouraged Mousa to undertake his work of deliverance, and now, just as he was on the point of realizing his sublime ideals, just as the people seemed prepared and eager to accept the "Ten Words of Righteousness" as their rule of faith and conduct, just as the Theocracy—the God-government—was proclaimed from the holy mount of God, just at this time of all times, when the true temple of God seemed complete in all its parts,—the whole structure falls to pieces like a house of cards and Mousa beholds the Israelites, the Elect People of Jehovah, performing a naked dance before the old idol that Terah, the father of Abraham, had worshipped in Ur of the Chaldees. The priest had triumphed over the prophet, and the son of Amram accepted his defeat with a resignation as sublimely patient in its forbearance as any other act of his life had ever been.

The priest now came to the front for the first time in Israel, and in the person of the disappointed, discredited, and embittered chief of the tribe of Levi claimed to be the rightful authority and custodian of religion. Mousa allowed this claim of the priest so long as it did not aspire to political power; and Aaron was set apart as the first high priest of Israel. But to prevent a repe-

tition of the awful lapse of the nation, the entire tribe of Levi, which alone had stood out against the apostasy, was appointed to be the perpetual guardian of the altar and the worship of Jehovah, that no idols should ever again be enthroned in Israel. And so careful was this guardianship that no one but the high priest was permitted to approach the Holy of Holies,—and even he but once in each twelve months. Moreover the disposition of all the tribes at the time of march around the tabernacle was to the same purpose; for no one save a Hebrew was permitted to approach the tent of the tabernacle, nor even to enter the camp of Israel, on penalty of death.

The hard and extreme measures employed by Mousa now were very unlike the mild rule which prevailed up to the time of the lapse, and indicate very clearly the awful seriousness of the situation. The fate of Israel was in fact trembling in the balance, and nothing but the utter self-renunciation of Mousa could have saved the seed of Abraham from destruction.

The only compensation to Mousa for the enforced establishment of the inevitable priesthood was the removal of Aaron from the council of the seventy, and his exclusion from all participation in the government of Israel. Mousa continued to be the sole

recognized channel of communication with Jehovah, so that all government and all real authority, both temporal and spiritual, still rested in his hands.

Aaron associated his strong-minded and ambitious sister with him in office, and she assumed the character of high priestess of Israel. As Aaron's rank and official dress were copied wholly from the Egyptian hierarchy so also were Miriam's. In the first flush of victory and in the excitement and pride attending their ceremonial induction to office as high priest and high priestess, the aged brother and sister saw only the glamour and outward show of their newly created dignity and rank, and did not at all perceive the utter emptiness of their gorgeous robes and high-sounding titles. But a very startling incident occurred during the induction ceremonies that brought home to the high priest and priestess in a most direct manner the painful fact that they were wholly without any substantial power or authority even in the conduct of the tabernacle worship. Nadab and Abihu, priests and sons of Aaron, evidently mistaking the apparent for a real authority of the priesthood, insolently departed from the authorized order of service,—were detected by the Levite soldier on guard, and immediately suffered the death penalty,

the high priest their father being powerless to save them.

This sad incident revealed to every one the true situation, viz, that Aaron had not gained in power, but on the contrary had really lost all authority as chief of his own tribe, for the Levites no longer looked to him but to the son of Nun as their leader. Not only this, but the men of Aaron's own tribe were virtually his guardians, placed over him and his sons to see that they did nothing contrary to the tabernacle code established by Mousa and the council of elders. The high priest and high priestess began also to realize that the people paid little or no deference, or even attention, to their lofty titles and pretensions, for their comings and goings were unmarked by any expressions of popular reverence or esteem; whilst their younger brother Mousa could not appear anywhere, at any time, without eliciting the most profound tokens of the people's respect, fear, and reverence.

"And it came to pass when Mousa went into the tabernacle that all the people rose up and stood every man at his tent door and looked after Mousa until he was gone into the tabernacle." This was gall and wormwood to the pride of the priestly house of Aaron. The high priest's sister Miriam felt the indignity more keenly than Aaron, and be-

gan to meditate on some way out of this humiliating position. Aaron advocated an open appeal to the people on the ground that the priesthood, which they had demanded and brought into being, was being stripped of all its rights and enslaved by Hosea and his soldiers. But Miriam knew better than that. She knew that such a direct appeal to the people to choose between Aaron and Mousa could only result in the increased power and glory of her younger brother, and the further humiliation of the priestly office. She therefore counselled patience and indirection, feeling sure that it only required time and a little sharp adversity to weaken Mousa's hold upon the fickle-minded multitude. Such were the thoughts and hopes and schemes of the high priest and high priestess of Israel whilst the prophet of God was travailing in unutterable sorrow and self-abandonment over the sins of the children of Israel.

"Yet now if Thou wilt forgive their sin;—and if not blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written." We have here presented in bold and unmistakable characters the striking contrast in the nature and functions of the prophet and the priest, as they first appear in the ancient traditions of Israel.

The constant prayer of the prophet was that he

might know God and serve his fellow-man. "Now therefore, I pray Thee, if I have found grace in Thy sight, show me now Thy way, that I may know Thee, that I may find grace in Thy sight: and consider that this nation is Thy people." There can be no mistaking the fact that this last clause contains a rebuke to Jehovah. Mousa for one moment, at least, supposed that man's love for his erring brother might exceed the love and forgiveness of God Himself. "Yet now if Thou wilt forgive their sin;—and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written." This gives the very highest touch to the sublime character of the son of Amram. His bold utterance was certainly not the language of a self-seeking courtier. There was no tone of cringing or flattery about it. He was far too much in earnest now for that sort of thing. The time had come for simple plain speech, if it must be even with Jehovah Himself, and Mousa's words had but one ring—that of reality. So sincerely, so earnestly, so completely had the son of Amram given himself to the work of delivering his people that he would rather break with Jehovah Himself and have his name blotted out of His book forever than to fail of his mission to his race. Thus unconsciously did Mousa's words and spirit of sublime self-sacrifice

reveal the true nature of God as the loving father of man.

The answer to Mousa's bold and manly, but as the priest would say, impious challenge, was not in the wrathful language of offended majesty but of infinite love and fatherly assurance. "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." Mousa felt now that his long struggle was ended. Not that he had accomplished his work of deliverance, or in any way succeeded in performing his mission as he had thought to do. On the contrary, his ideals had all been shattered to pieces before his eyes, and at the very moment when he looked for their complete realization. The Israelites had turned their backs upon the holy mount of God and had gone a-whoring after an idol in the next breath after they had entered voluntarily into a most solemn covenant to keep the "Ten Words of Righteousness" as their law of life. The priest, whose oppression, greed, and degrading influence in Egypt had first awakened in the son of Amram the spirit of reform,—the priest, who stood to Mousa for everything cunning, cruel, and unclean, had triumphed at last, and was now arrayed in his gorgeous Egyptian robes of office in the midst of Israel. And the people still murmured and would murmur against Mousa to the end.

Nothing had turned out as he had planned and prayed and striven. Moreover, he now gave up all hope of leading Israel into the promised land of Canaan. He felt now that he should never see the grave of Abraham nor the site of Bethel where the first true altar was dedicated to God without image or symbol. But notwithstanding all these sore and crushing defeats, notwithstanding the fact that nothing had come to pass in his own way; yet so firm and unalterable had grown the faith of this son of Amram in Jehovah as that God of Righteousness, and a Father of Infinite Love, that he could truly say from the depths of his sorrowing soul, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him." He had now come to know that there must be a complete emptying of self and self-will, a giving up and giving back of self into the hands of the Father of all, from Whom he came, and in Whom he lived and moved and had his real life and being. And the son of Amram lifted up his eyes and caught a glimpse of the far-off Gethsemane and in the spirit of the Christ that was to come prayed, "Not my will, but Thine be done."

The son of Amram had come at last to know that Jehovah was, to say the least, as long-suffering, as patient, and as forgiving as man could possibly be. More than that, he felt sure that

whilst the spirit of absolute self-forgetfulness was necessary to communion and identification with the Infinite Father, yet He did not require and would not accept the self-sacrificing atonement of one man for another, of the innocent for the guilty. In other words, Mousa, in the supremely exalted moment of his complete self-surrender and self-abandonment for the sins of the people of Israel,—in his absolute refusal to be blessed except through the redemption of his race, experienced a communion and identification with God and a sure knowledge of His love which brought with it a perfect faith, and hence a perfect peace. "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest."

Mousa had learned the capital lesson of human life, viz., that nothing great or good can be wrought in this world without the spirit of self-sacrifice, and he also realized that self-sacrifice was its own reward, that it was in fact the last refinement of judicious happiness, providing always that the spirit of sacrifice and not the desire for happiness be the controlling motive of life. He had now at last, after many long and hard and sorrowful years of travail, come to a complete knowledge of God; and peace, perfect peace, even in this his hour of outward defeat, took up her abode in his heart

never to go hence. It was the peace of perfect resignation to the voice of God and brought with it a foretaste of his eternal rest in the bosom of the infinite Father of all. The son of Amram was no longer troubled about many things, for he now felt sure that his work was God's work, and would be perfected in God's own time, and in His own way. This thought did not in any way minimize the value and necessity of his own efforts, past and to come; it did not lessen in any degree the supreme importance, the absolute duty of all human endeavor for the salvation of man; but it shot through the whole tangled warp and woof of life a golden thread of divine light, and clothed the world with the presence and love of an infinite Father. "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest."

CHAPTER XIX

THE CONSPIRACY AT HAZEROTH

THE journey from Sinai to Hazeroth was the hardest the Israelites had yet experienced, and the murmurs of the people were louder and longer, and their complaints against Mousa more bitter than they had ever been before. The way was not only hard, but thirst and famine smote the people as they toiled onward, up and down the barren hills, where the hard flinty chalk stones cruelly bruised, and thorns pricked, their sore and tired feet. At Kibroth-hattaavah (the grave of gluttony) the multitude halted, and the season of gaunt famine was followed,—notwithstanding the earnest warnings of Mousa,—by a month of unrestrained gluttony, which brought with it a plague that carried off more people than the famine had done. It was therefore with greatly depleted ranks and sorrow-marked faces, that the Israelites pitched their tents at last on the high ground of Hazeroth.

The strain of the march from Mount Sinai to Hazeroth upon the leader of Israel had been very great and the son of Amram was weary and lonely,

and willing to lay down the heavy burden of government, feeling sure that God's presence would not forsake Israel. The council of seventy relieved him of his duties as supreme judge; and the maintenance of order and the administration of the law, both civil and ecclesiastical, were placed in the wholly capable hands of the son of Nun, who had long since acquired an authority second only to Mousa. The great load of responsibility being for the moment lifted from his tired shoulders, the aged prophet turned his face once more toward the tent of his neglected but faithful and uncomplaining Zipporah, in quest of the earthly peace and domestic joy he had once experienced when he served his father-in-law Jethro, and watched his flocks in the plains of Midian. But this earthly happiness was never more to be his. No sooner had Mousa withdrawn from the outward show of authority, and the active and personal administration of government, than a conspiracy was on foot seeking to compass his overthrow as the prophet-judge of Israel. This conspiracy was hatched in the fertile brain of his very aged, but astute sister Miriam, the high priestess of Israel. She had, as we know, counselled her nephews to be patient and endure uncomplainingly for a time the indignity of having Hosea and his band of soldiers placed over

them as the guardians of the tabernacle worship. This she knew was not a sufficient grievance upon which to base her appeal to the people against her younger brother's arbitrary rule.

But the very thing she had looked for and wished for had now come to pass. Mousa to all appearance abdicated the government in favor of Hosea, and withdrew from the camp in the company of his Cushite wife :—why therefore should he still be regarded as the only channel of communication with Jehovah? He was in fact no longer a fit medium at all of divine communication or religious authority, for he was under the complete influence and power of the impure Cushite woman whom he had taken to wife when he was a refugee from the wrath of Pharaoh in the land of Midian. The evidences of this woman's influence were only too abundant. Had not her brother Hobab, the Midianitish prince, been received and entertained in the camp with the honors of a king? And when he desired to return to his own tribe, was he not restrained by promises from Mousa of an equal share in the possessions and blessings of Israel's race and religion? "Has not our self-constituted prophet-judge agreed with this Midianite prince that 'what goodness the Lord shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee'? Is not this a virtual division of our heri-

tage with an impure race? Who gave this younger son of Amram"—asked the high priestess of Israel —"the power and authority to make the tribe of this Cushite woman share equally in the blessings of the chosen people of God? Certainly not Jehovah, for He is the God of Israel alone, and not of the tribe of the Midianites. Let this Cushite woman and her brother look to their own God for a blessing and an inheritance, and not come between the children of Israel and Jehovah, the God of their fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

Nothing could have been more skilfully planned or more opportunely sprung therefore than this rebellion of the high priest and high priestess against the authority of Mousa. The Israelites were the most exclusive of all races. They would have no political, social, or religious intercourse with any other nation or people. This racial spirit had been born of oppression and wrong, and it was to this that the son of Amram had first appealed when he began his work of deliverance; and from the beginning of the exodus till the lapse of Israel at Mount Sinai, he had sought in every possible way to strengthen and develop this spirit of racial and religious exclusiveness. But now he had gone into the tent of the Cushite woman, and her brother, Hobab, the Midianitish prince, was honored above

the elders of Israel,—was given a portion of their inheritance and promised an equal share in the blessings of Jehovah—the God of Israel.

Such was the highly explosive situation in the camp of the Israelites when an unforeseen incident touched off the pent-up indignation and wounded pride of the priesthood, which now burst out into open rebellion. Mousa had declared that the spirit of prophecy was not confined to himself and the regularly established priesthood, but was given also to the council of seventy; and he admonished the people accordingly. But if the seventy could prophesy, why not seventy times seventy? Why not in fact all the people? So reasoned the first protestants "Eldad and Medad"; and Mousa being a true prophet of God allowed their claim, and said to his overzealous minister and general, Hosea, who was naturally jealous for Mousa's exclusive prophetical character, "Enviest thou for my sake? Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets!"

As Mousa had already declared at Mount Sinai that Israel was a nation of priests, so now he declares that all the people may become prophets of the Lord. But that was degrading, as the priests would say, the office both of the priest and the prophet to the level of the laity, and this must be

resisted at once and at all cost. No one can stir and move the noble sentiments of humanity as the true prophet of God: and no one can play upon the selfish prejudices and evil passions of mankind so skilfully as the priest; and the conspiracy of Miriam and Aaron would have succeeded in producing an open rebellion in the camp against the authority of Mousa but for the ever vigilant and amazingly prompt Hosea, who did not hesitate for one moment to lay his profane hands upon the sacred persons of the high priest and high priestess of Israel; and Mousa was hardly aware of the conspiracy before the chief conspirators were brought before him for judgment. Nothing was now wanting to make his earthly sorrow complete. To this sister he owed his salvation from the waters of the Nile, and the destroying hand of the pharaoh.

Mousa as we know was a man of strong passion and a stern—it may have been a harsh—sense of what was due to law and authority. He had visited a very swift and a very awful retribution upon the idolaters, and the priestly sons of Aaronat Mount Sinai. Hosea and all the people therefore expected that a like punishment would fall upon the heads of these arch-conspirators, who had attempted nothing less than the destruction of Mousa and the overthrow of his government. But what was the amazement of

all when the great prophet-judge of Israel uttered no word of anger or complaint, but quietly dismissed his prime minister Hosea and bade the people return to their tents. Mousa was now left alone with his aged brother and sister, and what took place between them was never known. We do know however that after they had communed with each other for a space in the privacy of Mousa's tent they came out and went hand in hand together to the tabernacle, where they offered their united prayers to God.

Mousa's treatment of Aaron and Miriam as plotters against his person and authority was an exhibition of such marked gentleness that it forever after stamped itself upon the memory of the Hebrews, and meekness came in time to be the distinguishing feature by which the first great prophet of Jehovah was known to Israel.

That a complete and permanent reconciliation took place between Mousa and his brother and sister is clearly evident from all that follows. Aaron is once again associated with Mousa in the government of the people; and we have once more the post-exodus expression "And the Lord spake unto Mousa and Aaron, saying."—

CHAPTER XX

DEMOS

DEMOCRACY is in theory the simplest, the best, and the strongest of all forms of government; but in reality it is the most complicated, and by far the hardest to practically carry out,—for to level authority is always to weaken it in the minds of the mass of the people. Two things had now come to pass, which, whilst they were good and only good in themselves, resulted in materially weakening the authority of Mousa as the prophet and lawgiver of Israel. The first of these occurrences was the bold and successful protest of Eldad and Medad against the exclusive assumption of holiness on the part either of the priest or the prophet, and the frank and noble confession of Mousa that all the people might prophesy if they would, and he prayed that they might.

This open and genuine course of Mousa destroyed at once the unique character with which the people had from the first invested him as the sole channel of communication with Jehovah. The other event was the conspiracy of the priesthood

against the authority of Mousa, and his failure to deal with the leaders of the rebellion as he had dealt with the idolaters at Sinai and the disloyal sons of Aaron. These two seemingly triumphant yet contradictory rebellions following each other in such close succession were interpreted by the people as evidences of the growing weakness in the authority of Mousa. So general became this conviction throughout the camp that Hosea, with all his ability as an organizer, commander, and administrator was unable to maintain the order, or exact the obedience necessary to healthy discipline and good government.

The great body of the Israelites had in fact taken in the true situation with that unconscious celerity and exactness which has occurred so often in the world's history, and which proves that the people as a whole are quicker to see and appreciate a vital change in the condition of things in church and state than the select and learned few.

The people of Israel were correct, therefore, both in their perception and judgment, for Mousa had lost greatly in authority by his generous and noble action. He himself saw this plainer than any one else, but he could not and would not attempt to regain his former arbitrary power. The conspiracy of his brother and sister was the last straw that

had broken his iron will. He could not punish them as their heinous crime deserved, and hence he would not punish them at all. But not to punish them was to weaken all discipline and all government, and to encourage an incipient condition of anarchy which now showed itself and was ever after an open menace not only to his authority but to the national life of Israel.

It is true that to all outward appearance Mousa's eye was not dim nor his natural force abated. And yet he knew that his work was done. He felt a giving way of his powers, and an uncontrollable desire for rest. The enormous load he had carried for four score years and more, and the constant strain of supreme authority and absolute responsibility had told heavily upon his marvellous strength of body and mind, and he now craved release from the actual responsibilities of government. All matters of capital importance were of course referred to him; but the son of Amram never again exercised the actual leadership of Israel.

Hosea and the council of seventy were now the actual sources of authority and decided all questions of civil government, whilst Aaron and his sons were left in the undisputed exercise of their priestly functions. The strong-minded and ambi-

tious Miriam had however played her last card and, having failed to win, never again attempted to thwart her younger brother or in any way to dominate the course of events. She fell out of prominence, and even out of notice among both the priests and the people, and ended her days in complete retirement and obscurity. That the relaxing grasp of the masterful hand of Mousa was felt throughout all the tribes of Israel was revealed in a most significant manner. There can be no doubt that Mousa and Hosea had intended to make the most direct invasion of Canaan from the camp at Kadesh. But the people now had their own way for the first time since their departure from Egypt.

The new-born democracy was becoming conscious of itself, and knowing that Mousa was no longer the directing mind and guiding hand refused to go forward until they should have positive assurance of the strength and position of the foe, as well as some knowledge of the character of the land—whether it were barren or fruitful. This cautious deliberating mood of the people showed plainly enough that their faith in Jehovah was waning, and with it their enthusiasm to possess the promised land.

At a general council of the chief men of all Israel it was determined to send a representative of each

tribe to spy out the land and report upon the strength of the inhabitants, and the character of the country. This policy was strenuously opposed by Hosea, who vigorously advocated a rapid march into Canaan by the most direct route. But notwithstanding his great reputation and unquestioned ability—to say nothing of his heretofore almost supreme authority—his counsel did not prevail; he not only failed to carry his point, but what was of much more importance he saw that he had lost command of the situation, and would no longer be able to preserve that discipline necessary to the health and strength of all the Israelites, but especially of his young warriors.

But the son of Nun resolved to make the best of a bad situation; he therefore elected to go with the delegation on its mission of exploration, and act as its leader. Hosea was of course first and last a soldier, but he was not wholly wanting in the arts of diplomacy, and did everything in his power to persuade his colleagues to take a cheerful and hopeful view of the land and its easy conquest. But he soon saw that he was no longer the chief minister and general of the dictator of Israel, but was considered only as one among twelve, all of whom were invested with equal independence of judgment and action. Caleb of the tribe of Judah was the

only representative of all the tribes who agreed with Hosea that the land was desirable in itself and that its conquest, though it might prove difficult, was certain if Israel would but show the courage that comes of undoubted faith in the power and favor of Jehovah.

To strengthen their hopeful accounts of the fruitfulness of the land, Hosea and Caleb brought back with them a huge cluster of the grapes of Eschol, together with specimens of figs and pomegranates. But the natural wealth and beauty of the land of Canaan could not tempt the now craven-hearted Israelites when they heard that their old and powerful enemies, the Amalekites, would be the first to confront them and dispute their entrance into the promised land of Canaan. The fact that these reports of the spies were received and considered by a popular assembly of all the people indicates clearly enough the very radical change which had suddenly taken place in the government of the Israelites.

The unfavorable accounts of the "Ten" were listened to, believed, and acted upon, and the people positively refused to be led against such powerful foes. Not only that, but so complete became the state of communism and anarchy that the Israelites denounced Mousa and Aaron in the most violent terms, and threatened to stone Hosea and Caleb

for presuming even to advise such a perilous adventure against the judgment of their ten colleagues. They went further than this even, and charged Jehovah with treachery against themselves, their wives and their children, and "said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return to Egypt." It was Demos without Theos and quickly resulted in Chaos.

But with the fickleness of a multitude that has no head the Israelites suddenly determined to march against the Canaanites and thus show to their discarded and disgraced leaders what "the people" could do when they chose to assert their rights and their might. As a craven fear of the Amalekites had at first made them faint-hearted and weak, so now a vain and empty conceit of their own importance filled them with a spirit of bravado, and choosing a new leader they broke camp and set their faces toward the uplands of Canaan. Mousa and Hosea and Aaron did everything in their power to dissuade them. But these warnings only excited the multitude to a more reckless haste in their mad enterprise; and they answered, "But yesterday you urged us to this attack, and now that you are no longer our masters you dissuade us. We will show you what we can do without either your leadership or your advice."

The Amalekites and Canaanites had for some time expected an invasion from the Israelites, and in order to the more effectually resist them, they had wisely formed an alliance, offensive and defensive, and were now ready with their united forces to repel an attack. Their scouts soon reported that the enemy was rapidly approaching in great numbers, but apparently without order or proper leadership. The allied forces could not at first understand this want of caution on the part of the Israelites, and suspected a ruse, for they knew too well that Mousa and Hosea understood as no one else the art of war, and they supposed of course that it was with these renowned commanders they had to contend. They therefore withdrew to the higher ground, chose the best possible position, and stood ready for the assault of the Israelites, who, finding their advance unopposed, and believing that no enemy would dare to confront them, penetrated some distance into the hill country; when suddenly the Amalekites and the Canaanites were upon them with a quickness of action and a weight of force that shattered at once their thin and disorderly ranks, and they were sent flying back the way they had come.

The Israelites fled till they reached Hormah, and did not again offer battle or even recover themselves

as a body; but scattered themselves in complete disorder over the south country round about Kadesh, where Mousa and Aaron and Hosea had remained, with the ark of the covenant. Who led the Israelites in this wild and fatal attack upon the Canaanites is not known; but he certainly did not survive his ignominious defeat. The Israelites were now completely broken up as a nation, and almost as tribes, and it required many long and patient years to gather them together once more into one body politic, with one faith and one hope in one God.

CHAPTER XXI

PISGAH

THE priest always stands, has always stood for arbitrary authority, for a prescribed and inflexible order of things. This has been his principal source of strength. The priest is never sincerely a democrat, or a reformer, whatever he may pretend to be, for to acknowledge the principle of democracy or reform would be to cut the ground from under his own feet. He therefore almost invariably supports the existing authority, whatever it may be, and in this way gradually acquires in time a part or the whole of that authority for himself. It is true that he often criticises, and sometimes breaks with the constituted powers—as in the case of Aaron against Mousa; but he never does this *pro bono publico*, but only when he feels his own claims ignored, and always in the hope to gain power. I repeat, the priest has never been, can never be, a reformer. The nature of his office and his claims forbid this, and the moment he attempts it he is in the very act changed into a prophet.

Had the idolatrous revolution at Sinai succeeded,

the priest in the person of Aaron would have become the sole authority in Israel. But it failed, and the priest lost all power, and hence all the respect of the people—for among the multitude respect goes only where power is seen to reside. It was this want of authority and respect which maddened Miriam the high priestess, and brought about the conspiracy against the supreme authority of Mousa. This conspiracy failed as a political revolution; and yet the people saw that in some measure, and in some way, the priesthood had gained its purpose, for it was no longer ignored by Mousa and Hosea, but honored with increased respect and authority. This greatly strengthened the priestly house of Aaron in the mind of the multitude, and weakened the authority of the prophet Mousa. Mousa saw and felt this. But there was another person who saw and felt it clearer than any one else, and determined to profit by it. This person was the priest Eleazar, a son of Aaron, and next to him in the succession to the high priesthood of Israel. Eleazar was by accident a priest, but by nature a ruler of men, and the time had most opportunely arrived when the office of the priest was not only the best possible means, but the very thing in fact, through which to exert his powers as a ruler. Mousa and Hosea had both been seriously, if not fatally dis-

credited; for they had lost control of the people, who had revolted against their authority and conducted a war on their own account. But the Israelites were now beaten and broken and scattered. Here was the priest's opportunity, and Eleazar did not let it slip.

He had seen from the first that the attempt of Demos to rule could only end in Chaos, and he proposed in every possible way to take advantage of this situation when it should arrive. He would not go with Demos, for this would involve the priesthood in his defeat. He therefore stood by Mousa the lawgiver and by the ark of the covenant of Jehovah. Thus the priesthood had suffered no loss by the revolution. Its authority had not been defied and discredited,—as in the case of Mousa and Hosea; nor had its dignity and power been compromised by the defeat and humiliation of the people. Everything else in Israel had suffered sadly by the revolt of Demos, the priesthood only had gained by it, and now came to the front as the one thing left in all Israel to which the people could look up and around which they could rally. All parties saw and recognized this fact, and to Eleazar was universally accorded the authority of reorganizing the broken tribes of Israel into a nation. It is true that the high priest Aaron was still living,

but he had long since lost all authority or influence and was high priest only in name, Eleazar being the real power. This was perfectly well understood; and the people knew that it was with him and not with Aaron that they had to deal. Eleazar was moderate in all things, and wise enough to associate the consummate soldier Hosea with him in government. But the Levite soldiers were no longer the guardians, but the servants of the priesthood and the tabernacle; and the house of Aaron became firmly established in the authority and succession of the high priesthood of Israel.

Eleazar possessed many of the great qualities of his uncle Mousa. He had always been loyal to him, and had shown the most unbounded admiration and reverence for his character and authority. He had refused to go with his elder brothers Nadab and Abihu in their idolatrous departure from the established ritual at the dedication ceremonies of the tabernacle, and had persuaded his younger brother Ithamar to follow him instead of them. He only of all the house of Aaron had shown spirit enough to oppose the disloyal schemes of his aunt, the high priestess, and hence was in no way implicated or compromised by the conspiracy of the priesthood against Mousa. Eleazar had the full confidence of Mousa and Hosea, whose counsels were received

by him as the word of truth and authority; and the mass of the people showed him the respect born of fear. But notwithstanding these favorable circumstances his work of reorganization was slow, and required infinite tact and patience. He was not without critics and opponents, and the strength of this opposition grew with the increasing order and power of the people. The chief men of his own tribe resented more and more, as time went on, the change he had made in the position of the Levites, from the guardians of the priesthood and the custodians of the tabernacle to that of servants of the priests. This opposition grew stronger and stronger until it at last culminated in an open rebellion of two hundred and fifty chief men with their followers.

At the head of this rebellion was Korah, a first cousin of Mousa and Aaron,—and hence a second cousin of Eleazar. He was the civil chief of the tribe of Levi, and did not relish his humiliating position as the captain of a band of servants to the priesthood. Korah associated with him in the leadership of this rebellion two Reubenites, Dathan and Abiram, and these three persons together with two hundred and fifty other "men of renown" presented themselves before Mousa and Aaron and stated their protest against the assumptions of the priesthood in very

plain, direct, and not over-civil words. "Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, *every one of them*, and the Lord is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?"

One successful revolution makes way for many more. Eldad and Medad had opened the way for the fatal revolt of all Israel at Kadesh, and that revolt was now followed by the rebellious protest of Korah, Dathan and Abiram. This was however a revolt directed specifically against the innovations of a hierarchical priesthood, and not against the authority of the prophet-judge. Korah, Dathan, Abiram and their adherents demanded a return to the ancient patriarchal and now priestly order of government under which all Israelites were equal before Jehovah. They addressed their protest to both Aaron and Mousa; but they felt certain that Mousa the prophet would espouse their cause as he had espoused the cause of Eldad and Medad, for they were only carrying out to its logical conclusion the protest of these two men which had been fully granted by Mousa. But the prophet Mousa had given over the reins of government into the hands of Eleazar the priest. He felt that the priest was the only power that could bring order and government out of the sad state of anarchy that was

now prevailing in Israel. Mousa therefore stood firmly by the validity and authority of the priest and the hierarchy; and the very formidable rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram against the new order of things was crushed, and its leaders punished with death. But the execution of so many "men of renown" produced a feeling of fierce hatred against the priesthood which hindered in many ways, and for many years, the formation of a strong and stable government. But this finally came about under the wise and skilful management of Eleazar and Hosea, and another invasion of Canaan was at last undertaken.

But the son of Amram had no part nor lot in the matter. His work was done, and it was enough for him that he saw once more Israel abiding in his tents, a strong and valiant people; and he knew that under the leadership of Hosea they would soon enter and possess the promised land of Canaan. But he was not to go with them. How strange this seemed! For this had been the one thought, the one purpose which had animated his life for more than sixty years. His one ambition, his one hope, his one mission—and as he knew, God-given mission—had been to lead the children of Israel out of the bondage of Egypt into the promised land of Canaan. And now, when the long

deferred time had come, when all the trials and failures, all the doubts and dangers, all the hungerings and thirstings, all the grievous hardships of forty years' wanderings in the wilderness had been met and endured and passed,—now when the promised land was in sight, and would soon be in the possession of Israel, he who had conceived this mighty work of deliverance and wrought its success was not to enter in, was not to obtain his reward, was not to behold the grave of Abraham nor the altar at Bethel, but must die as his brother and sister, Aaron and Miriam, had died,—as his faithful, his always cheerful, his loving and beloved Zipporah had died; he must die and his grave should be forever unknown to future generations. In a word Mousa now saw that the son of Amram was to be forever blotted out from the face of the earth. No, not that! Whatever of him that was worthy to survive would live immortal in the life of Israel. This thought now became his consolation. It was better so, far better that one should sow and another reap, that one should build and another dwell therein. His mission was now wholly stripped of self, and a wave of peace and joy broke over and possessed the son of Amram, as he slowly made his way up the Mount of Pisgah into the pure light and air of God.

On and on he went till he stood at the top of Nebo's peak, and here, with the noises of the world below shut out,—here alone with nature, and near to the blue heavens above where the moon and the stars kept on their silent ways,—here on Pisgah's peak the son of Amram took his stand and looked below. A fair scene met his gaze,—a scene of hill and dale, of field and forest, of mountain and river. Yonder towered aloft Mount Hermon covered with her pure mantle of eternal snow. To the right the cedars of Lebanon spread their branches far away. Toward the sea Mount Carmel and Gilboa stood out in bold relief as the mighty sentinels of God to warn Israel that danger lay that way. At Mousa's feet lay the still waters of the Dead Sea; he saw the Jordan as a silver thread hemming the borders of the promised land; and he knew that beyond this bright border, within the uplands sloping gently to the west, was Bethel, where the first true altar of Jehovah was dedicated without image or symbol; and he felt sure that as time went on this spot would come to be the most sacred place on earth to the Israelites, that they would at last return to the pure and simple worship of their father Abraham.

As the son of Amram thus gazed and thought upon the scene below, he felt that his cup of earthly

joy was full; and he prayed that he might die where now he stood, with the promised land spread out before him. And as he prayed he slept, and dreamed a dream of perfect peace. And when he woke—he was with his God.

THE END

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Son of Amram.

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